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ROUTLEDGE

THE MUSICAL HERITAGE OF AL-ANDALUS

Dwight F. Reynolds

The Musical Heritage of Al-Andalus

The Musical Heritage of Al-Andalus is a critical account of the history of Andalusian music in Iberia from the Islamic conquest of 711 to the final expulsion of the Moriscos (Spanish Muslims converted to Christianity) in the early 17th century. This volume presents the documentation that has come down to us, accompanied by critical and detailed analyses of the sources written in Arabic, Old Catalan, Castilian, Hebrew, and Latin. It is also informed by research the author has conducted on modern Andalusian musical traditions in Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Egypt, Lebanon, and Syria.

While the cultural achievements of medieval Muslim Spain have been the topic of a large number of scholarly and popular publications in recent decades, what may arguably be its most enduring contribution – music – has been almost entirely neglected. The overarching purpose of this work is to elucidate as clearly as possible the many different types of musical interactions that took place in medieval Iberia and the complexity of the various borrowings, adaptations, hybridizations, and appropriations involved.

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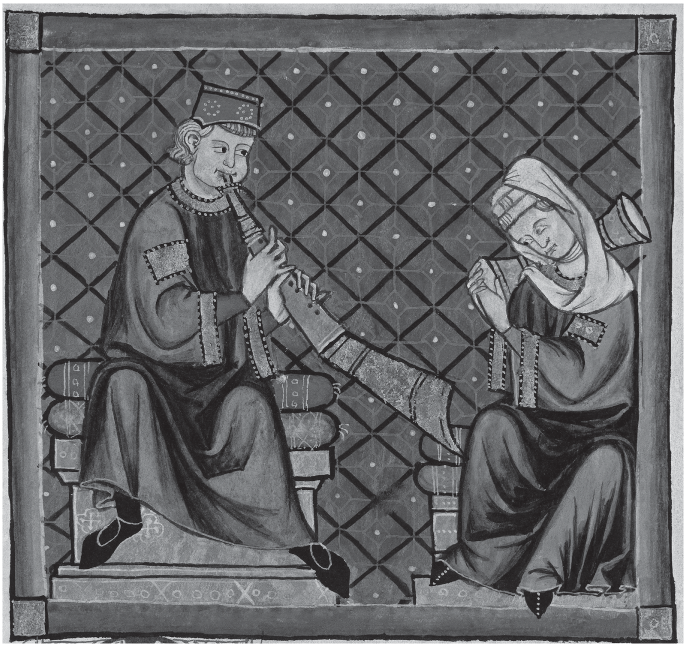

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Introduction

Medieval Muslim Spain – referred to as "Moorish Spain" in English, *al-Andalus* in Arabic, and *Sepharad* in Hebrew – left a rich cultural heritage in agriculture, art, architecture, gardening, medicine, mysticism, philosophy, poetry, the physical sciences, urban planning, and other realms. Perhaps the single most remarkable and enduring contribution of that society, however, has been in the field of music. Al-Andalus, it shall be argued in this volume, was one of a number of points of cultural contact and exchange around the Mediterranean that had a profound impact on medieval music in Europe as well as in the Arabo-Islamic World. Through this network of exchange, for example, the rebec (Ar. *rabāb*) and the lute (Ar. *al-ʻūd*) were introduced to Europe, later adaptations of which became nearly emblematic of late medieval and early Renaissance European music. In addition, a new strophic song-form emerged in the 10th–11th centuries known in Arabic as *muwashshaḥ* if the text was in classical Arabic and *zajal* if the text was in a colloquial Arabic dialect. Appearing first in al-Andalus, this new song-form spread rapidly across the entire Arabic-speaking Middle East, and has remained in continuous performance for nearly a thousand years from Morocco in the west, to Syria and Iraq in the north, to Yemen in the south. This song-form also had a profound effect on Jewish music, becoming one of the major vehicles for song genres in Hebrew such as *piyyutim* and *bakkashot*, in which even today medieval poems composed by the great Andalusian Jewish poets are sung to the same melodies as Muslim and Christian Arabs sing their texts. This song-form is also recognizably related to some of the best-known music of medieval Christian Iberia, including the 13th-century *Cantigas de Santa María* and the Gallego-Portuguese *cantigas de amigo*, though the precise nature of that relationship, as we shall see, is hotly debated.

Despite the fascinating and very significant historical role played by the music of medieval Muslim Spain, and the rather large amount of scholarship on this subject published in Arabic, French, and Spanish, it has been nearly a century since a work published in English undertook a detailed study of this remarkable tradition (and that work was in fact an abridged translation from the Spanish).[1] The present volume therefore seeks to fill this lacuna in a manner accessible to non-specialists while also providing enough technical detail to satisfy those with a more detailed knowledge of medieval music. A volume of this scope inevitably runs into a variety of methodological problems, some of which deserve to be discussed here at the outset.

Methodological issues

To begin with, music of the distant past is not recuperable. Although we at times possess rich historical documentation *about* music, we do not and cannot examine the music itself, as it was performed and listened to in pre-modern times. Music is, or at least was until the advent of audio-recordings, relentlessly ephemeral.

Nevertheless, the music of al-Andalus was, in the first half of the 20th century, at the center of a great debate that then raged over the question of what “influence” Arabo-Islamic culture did or did not have on medieval Europe and what role that “influence” may have played in setting the stage for the European Renaissance. In particular, heated arguments were exchanged about the question of Arab musical influence on medieval European musical traditions such as the 12th–13th century Provençal, Occitan, and Catalan troubadours, as well as on the 13th-century *Cantigas de Santa María* of Alfonso X, and the 13th-century Gallego-Portuguese *cantigas de amor* and *cantigas de amigo*. Proposals that suggested Arab origins for any aspect of these traditions were vigorously rejected by some scholars who refused to acknowledge any Arab influence – indeed often any contact with Arab music – whatsoever. These exchanges boiled down to two opposing camps, one of which saw an indisputable role for Arabo-Islamic culture and music in the history of European civilization, and the other, which viewed all such claims as anathema, imagining European culture instead to have been hermetically sealed off from any enduring traces of contact with Muslims during the 900 years of Muslim presence in the Iberian Peninsula from 711 to the final expulsions of the Moriscos (Muslims who were converted to Christianity) in 1609–14.[2] During most of this bitter debate, however, very little attention was given to the music of al-Andalus per se, since it was viewed almost exclusively as a puzzle piece within the larger question of the relationship between East and West, understood as Christian Europe and the Islamic Middle East.

Among the most prominent of the scholars participating in that debate were Julián Ribera y Tarragó, Henry George Farmer, Higinio Anglés, and Kathleen Schlesinger.[3] Given the large body of new evidence that has emerged in the ensuing years, some of the extreme views expressed by both sides now seem untenable: the “Occidentalist” portrayals of a European culture that was immune to outside forces would now be almost laughable given the vast body of historical documentation to the contrary were it not for a handful of modern scholars who still champion this position, such as the Spanish Arabist Serafín Fanjúl and more recently literary historian Darió Fernández-Morera.[4] On the other hand, the “Arabist” school’s views at times reduced Arabo-Islamic culture to scarcely more than a conduit for ancient Greek thought, with little acknowledgment of its original and innovative contributions, and these claims are thus equally ripe for reevaluation. It is, quite simply, time for a fresh look at the rich musical world of medieval Iberia and its relationship to the multiple musical traditions of the modern world that trace their origins back to that source.

In the broader field of medieval Iberian studies, modern scholarship has for the most part moved beyond the extremes of the "Arabist" versus the "Occidentalist" approaches, and contemporary scholars now enthusiastically explore the complexities and fascinating ambiguities of cultural interactions in medieval Iberia.[5] This sense of ambiguity, fluidity, and complexity has, however, not yet been taken up in the field of Iberian music history. There continue to be, I would suggest, two intellectual traps that impede reaching a more nuanced and more accurate understanding of the musical cultures of medieval Iberia: one is the paradigm of "influence," which continues to haunt the field, albeit in slightly modified forms, and the second is the now widespread tendency to view all cultural phenomena in medieval Iberia as reflections of the supposed tripartite division of Iberian society into *las tres culturas* – Jews, Christians, and Muslims.

"Influence" is a term that is intellectually both slippery and sloppy, for it allows us to imply in abstract terms that some sort of relationship between two phenomena or social groups existed without having to specify what we think actually took place. It is also a term that is dangerously fraught with unarticulated implications. To begin with, "influence" denotes a process that is unidirectional; it does not allow for any "back and forth," "give and take," cultural negotiation, hybridization, or cross-fertilization. It is a process in which something, quite literally, flows *in one direction* into something else. In addition, it effectively robs the receiving party of any form of agency, an aspect that is made particularly clear by contrasting it with other terms such as to borrow, adopt, adapt, embrace, espouse, acquire, obtain, utilize, repurpose, modify, reshape, among others. In the process of "influence," one party is understood to have been essentially passive. When one culture "influences" another, the process is also characterized to some degree as being inexorable and unstoppable, and the "influenced" culture appears neither to have had, nor made, any choices or decisions about whether or not to accept or embrace these changes. This is in part true because the term influence also carries within it an unspoken power differential – "strong" cultures influence "weaker" cultures, not the other way round. It is no accident that in many accounts of cultural contact, colonial (i.e., strong) powers are portrayed as having "influenced" colonized (i.e., weak) cultures, whereas any movement in the opposite direction is typically portrayed as a "borrowing" or an "adaptation." Those who argue against the idea of having been "influenced" (such as the "Occidentalists" cited above), are often reacting as much to these unspoken implications of weakness and passivity as they are to the actual idea of cultural exchange. This volume will argue that cultural contacts are in fact far more complex, that there are always choices and decisions being made (in short, agency), and that the results of cultural contacts are almost never detectable on only one side of the encounter. Almost all cultural phenomena have "complex genealogies."

Given the desire to find influence, modern scholars often take texts that depict cultural *contact* and interpret them as proof of cultural *influence.* Points of contact are relatively easy to document historically, and this volume includes what may strike many readers as an astonishingly large number of times, places, and ways that various musical traditions in medieval Iberia came into contact with each other. But I strive here to limit the interpretation of these contacts to what the original sources actually say. Contact is easy to document, but influence is decidedly not. If there is any intellectual agenda in the approach taken here, it is perhaps my conviction, after years of reading through these historical materials and observing living musical traditions, that borrowings, adaptations, transformations, and cross-fertilizations were constantly at work, not only in the realm of music, but in all aspects of medieval Iberian society. This is, quite simply, the nature of human culture.

The study of the music of al-Andalus and of medieval Iberian culture in general, is also trapped in another matrix, one that tends to approach all cultural phenomena through the lens of Jews, Christians, and Muslims. This is an optic that emerged mostly strongly from another "great debate," engaged in by Américo Castro and Claudio Sánchez-Albornoz and their followers over the nature of Spanish culture and identity.[6] In very simplified terms, Castro argued that Spanish identity was forged in the mixing of Jewish, Christian, and Arabo-Muslim cultures, and that Jews and Arabs were therefore not "foreign," but rather constituent elements of Spanish culture. Castro proposed a model of "living together" that he termed *convivencia* and popularized the notion of a Spain of "The Three Cultures" (*las tres culturas*), meaning Jewish, Muslim, and Christian. Albornoz, on the other hand, argued that Spanish identity – Catholic and eternal – was forged in the period of Visigothic rule (410–711 CE), survived by fending off the influences of Jewish and "Moorish" culture, and then reemerged, purified and resilient after the "reconquest" of Iberia and the expulsion of the "foreign" communities of Jews and Muslims.

The tripartite division proposed by Castro, however, conceals and suppresses many elements critical to understanding al-Andalus and medieval Iberia. For scholars of other parts of the world, this encounter between three monotheistic, closely related faiths is not particularly impressive as an example of diversity. Baghdad of the 8th–10th centuries, Istanbul of the 15th–19th centuries, any number of cities along the Silk Road such as Samarqand and Bukhara, and many other locations in different periods of time, have all encompassed far more religious, linguistic, and ethnic diversity than Iberia ever did. So why does the example of Iberian Muslims, Jews, and Christians coexisting (whether peacefully or in a state of constant tension) have such a profound hold on the modern Western imagination? First and foremost, because this took place on what is perceived to be "Western" (i.e., "European") soil. Compared to many other regions in the world, Europe has never been particularly diverse ethnically or religiously, and Iberia is a bit of land in which the modern West is heavily invested culturally and historically. Westerners are not, on the whole, interested in *convivencia* in Baghdad, Istanbul, or Samarqand, because those places are not located *in the West*, and the societies and cultures of those locations have never been argued to have *influenced* the West as profoundly as medieval Muslim Spain.

As we shall see in this volume, the division into Muslims, Christians, and Jews also draws our attention away from many other identities that are alluded to in historical sources: Imazighen[7] (Berbers, and their many tribal affiliations), *muwallad*s (the offspring of mixed Arab and non-Arab parentage), northern versus southern Arab tribes, Slavs (*Saqāliba*), Basques, Castilians, Aragonese, Catalans, Valencians, and, running throughout all of these groups, large numbers of slaves of diverse origins who constituted a significant percentage of the population, as well as numerous other regional and urban-based identities. Sadly, when the question of tolerance in medieval Iberia is raised in modern scholarship, it is immediately assumed that one is speaking about religious tolerance among the three religious communities – all other forms of tolerance remain almost entirely unexplored: How much tolerance, for example, existed for distinct ethnicities such as the Imazighen? How much tolerance existed at different times *within* these communities on various social, sexual, religious, and intellectual matters? How much tolerance was there at different times and places for "deviant" gender and sexual roles/identities? How much tolerance existed for philosophers or free thinkers who espoused rational approaches to the great questions of existence and at times came close to arguing for a "God-less" universe? (It is worth noting that the works of both Maimonides, the great Jewish scholar, and Ibn Rushd [Latin: Averroes], the great Muslim philosopher, were banned and burned *by their own communities* at various times and places.) How much tolerance and freedom were granted to women in different eras and regions? How much tolerance or mobility existed among different economic classes or among rural and urban communities? All of these questions and many more have been almost completely overshadowed in recent decades by the modern Western obsession with the idea of Jews, Muslims, and Christians living together on "Western" soil. This obsession is rooted almost entirely in modern political and social concerns and provides a very poor description of the social complexities of medieval Iberian society.

These three sectarian communities and the identities associated with them undoubtedly played very important roles in medieval Iberian culture, but identity is fluid, situational, and contextual. In times of collaboration, aspects of social difference may be entirely latent and ignored, while in times of conflict, various distinctions (based in religious, regional, ethnic, class or gender differences) can be called forth to define and sharpen the lines of contention. The challenge is therefore to understand when particular aspects of identity are invoked and when they are quietly laid aside, and what the implications and results were when various social identities came to the fore and engaged with others.[8]

The title of this work has been chosen with some care. The reference to the "musical heritage" of al-Andalus is in part meant to indicate both that there are modern musical traditions rooted in this period of time and that we in fact know very little about the actual music of al-Andalus.[9] We have no contemporary transcriptions of the music of the medieval courts of Cordoba, Sevilla, or Granada, let alone the popular music of the masses. What we do have from the medieval period are texts that provide – often through brief, isolated anecdotes – disjunct pieces of information. The sum total of all of these diverse bits of information does not, in my opinion, allow for the creation of a coherent historical narrative of the many various musical traditions that came into contact in medieval Muslim Spain, nor of the unique new musical form that emerged from that encounter and then subsequently spread across wide regions of the Mediterranean and beyond. It is for this reason that I have not termed this work a *history* of the music of al-Andalus.

What exists are clusters of texts that provide occasional glimpses of different aspects of these traditions in specific times and places. For some periods of time we have rather detailed biographical information about singers and musicians; from other periods of time we have collections of song texts; from still other periods we have rich iconographic sources about musical instruments; and from others we have detailed financial records about how much musicians were paid, how long they resided in the courts, and how much it cost to purchase and repair musical instruments. But these clusters of detailed information are like stepping stones across a broad river, sometimes separated by centuries and great distances. For the overall period and region covered in this volume (roughly 8th- to early 17th-century Iberia), we do not possess anything approaching a complete portrait of musicians, repertory, instruments, patrons, finances, and audiences from any one location at a particular point in time. Within the limitations of these varied and dispersed records, this volume attempts to provide a survey of the extant sources and to provide a straightforward account of what we do (and do not) know, attempting to answer some of the more troublesome questions, leaving open those that cannot be answered at this point in time, acknowledging gaps where there are gaps, and, wherever possible, providing scholarly translations of the most significant primary sources, a number of which have never before been translated.

Despite the very incomplete nature of the historical record, the larger contours of the development of what is today referred to as Andalusi (or Andalusian) music are nevertheless discernible. As a result of the Muslim conquest of Iberia in 711, a new, complex cluster of cultures, each with its own musical traditions, was brought into contact. These musical traditions continued to be performed for centuries, with many moments of contact and cross-fertilization among them. For the majority of these traditions we have little to no detailed information; it is only the art music of the courts that is reasonably well documented. Then, sometime in the late 10th to early 11th century, a new song-form emerged that was quite distinct from everything that had gone before. This new musical form with its twin names (*muwashshaḥ* for songs in classical Arabic and *zajal* for ones in colloquial Arabic) was composed first in Arabic and soon thereafter also in Hebrew, and was to become among the most successful musical forms in human history, for it has now been performed continuously for roughly a thousand years, and in modern times it continues to be performed in a dozen or so different countries of the Middle East. Although always bearing the cachet of being Andalusi in origin, the new song-form quickly spread across the Middle East in the 11th and 12th centuries and by the 13th century was found in urban centers from Morocco to Iraq, and south as far as Yemen. Once adopted in these new locations, local poets and composers immediately began to add to the repertory that had arrived from al-Andalus. There was no sense in the Middle Ages that the repertory should not be expanded with new compositions; quite the opposite, for as soon as the new song-form arrived in a region, local composers began to try their hand at creating songs of this type, often by "borrowing" the melody of an older song and setting new words to it, a process known as *contrafactum* composition. Indeed, the first author to write a work dealing specifically with this type of music, the Cairene scholar Ibn Sanā' al-Mulk (1155–1211) proudly appended to his treatise a number of his own *muwashshaḥ* compositions, and boasted in personal letters that they were being sung by nearly everyone in Cairo.[10] Thus the overall repertory continued to grow, and eventually songbooks with hundreds of song texts were compiled.[11] For the most part, however, both the structure and the core set of themes and motifs from the original Andalusi model were retained, such that this music was everywhere recognizable and distinct from other repertories. The term Andalusi music in modern usage therefore does *not* refer to a body of song that was composed in medieval al-Andalus and passed down unchanged for centuries, but rather to a specific form and style that *originated* in al-Andalus. Just as composers around the world can compose jazz, whether or not they are American, so composers throughout the Arabic-speaking Middle East have created and performed new pieces *in the Andalusi style.* Composers over the centuries have been so adept, in fact, at retaining the original flavor of the genre that today we often cannot tell if a particular piece is from the 19th century or is several centuries older. However, because regional traditions have developed their own preferences for *how* to perform this music (using different instruments, different mixes of solo versus choral singing, specific rhythms, and even specific techniques for playing certain instruments), anyone who knows this music well usually *can* tell what region a given performance or recording is from, sometimes down to the exact city or town.[12] In many places in the modern Arab world, this repertory, while acknowledged to have originated in medieval Muslim Spain, is also embraced as being a vibrant part of *local* or *regional* identity. This is a tradition, therefore, that is both medieval and modern, as well as Andalusi *and* pan-Arab *and* intensely local, all at the same time.[13]

This volume focuses on the early period of the history of this vast musical tradition, primarily within the Iberian Peninsula, from the 8th to the early 17th centuries, ending with the ultimate expulsion of the Moriscos from Spain in 1609–14. A projected second volume will cover the many strands of Andalusi music across the Middle East from the 15th century to the present. This division into two separate volumes reflects not only the eclipse of Andalusi music in its homeland of the Iberian Peninsula, but also a dramatic change in the nature of the historical documentation. From the 15th century to the 19th century, we find almost no biographical information about musicians or composers of musicians in this tradition, with equally few descriptions of performances or information about musical instruments. On the other hand, in this same time period there was a sudden increase in the production of songbooks in Arabic and Hebrew, works that include lyrics, some basic musical information (such as the names of rhythms and melodic modes), and every now and then a glimpse of regional performance practices. Beyond the songbooks, each regional tradition possesses a certain amount of local historical documentation, but these scattered bits of information have not yet been compiled into an academic work that provides an overarching sense of the history of this musical heritage.[14] Finally, of course, with the advent of sound recording from the early 20th century onward, we have direct evidence of how the music actually sounded and how it was performed. Early recordings can now be compared with contemporary traditions, and a much more detailed portrait of this repertory can thus be created for recent decades than is possible for the Middle Ages.

Ultimately, the present volume aims to explore musical life in al-Andalus from the 8th to 17th centuries in as much detail as possible, and to do so without being unduly guided by the questions of origins and influence that dominated earlier scholarship. Instead, I hope to open up our understanding of music in medieval al-Andalus as part of a complex network of cultural exchanges. Despite the unevenness of the extant historical record and our unfortunate inability to recuperate the music itself, I hope that readers will find in this account a sense of the richness of medieval Andalusi music and of the cultures that contributed to its formation and transmission. In addition, it is hoped that this study of Andalusi music will contribute to the growing body of ethnomusicological research that focuses on the medieval and early modern courtly musical traditions of the Middle East and South Asia by such scholars as Walter Feldman, Eckhard Neubauer, George Sawa, Katherine Butler Schofield, Bonnie C. Wade, Owen Wright, and others.[15]

Notes on terminology and transliteration

In English there is a single adjectival form – “andalusian” – for both al-Andalus (medieval Muslim Spain) and the modern province of southern

Spain, Andalucía. In Spanish the distinction is clear since the adjective from al-Andalus is *andalusí,* whereas the adjective for modern Andalucía is *andaluz* (f. *andaluza*). Thus, *la música andalusí* and *la música andaluza* are not easily confused. For good reason, then, the term *andalusi* has been adopted by a growing number of scholars and will be used in this volume. Readers should understand, however, that it is still common in English to refer to "Andalusian music," despite the ambiguity of the term, and that most older publications refer to this music in that manner.[16]

I must apologize to my Middle Eastern colleagues for the use of the terms "medieval" and "Middle Ages" throughout this volume, since these western concepts do not map well onto Middle Eastern history. They are, however, terms that are widely understood, and the Arabo-Islamic practice of referring to different time periods in dynastic terms (Umayyad, Abbasid, Fatimid, Ayyubid, Mamluk, etc.) is opaque to all but specialists.

Many individuals who appear in this volume are known by multiple versions of their names: some Arab writers are often referred to in English by their Latinized names (Avicenna, Averroes, Avempace); for the Arabic-speaking Jewish writers of al-Andalus there are typically three versions to choose from (English, Arabic, Hebrew); and many Christian Iberian monarchs are variously referred to in works of history by the English, Castilian, Catalan or Portuguese versions of their name (e.g. John, Juan, Jaume, João). In general, I have given preference to the Arabic and Castilian versions of names simply because these are the most familiar to English readers, except for cases where an accepted common form exists, such as Maimonides and Saladin.

Several Arabic-derived geographic terms are used here including *Mashriq* for the Eastern Mediterranean, *Maghrib* for the western part of North Africa, and *Ifrīqiya* for the region occupied by modern Tunisia.

The transliteration style for Arabic is that of the *International Journal of Middle East Studies* (IJMES). All translations from Arabic, Castilian, Catalan, French, and Latin are my own except where otherwise noted.

Notes

1 *Music in Ancient Arabia and Spain: being La música de las Cantigas by Julián Ribera y Tarragó*, tr. and abrg. by Eleanor Hague and Marion Leffingwell (London: Oxford University Press; Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1929).

2 The Moriscos were Iberian Muslims who had been converted to Christianity, sometimes forcibly and sometimes voluntarily, who nevertheless retained elements of their own culture such as the Arabic language, distinctive habits of dress and cooking, as well as their own traditions of music and dance, including the use of certain characteristic musical instruments (see Chapter 12).

3 The Schlesinger–Farmer debate is documented in Farmer 1930; Ribera's views are available in English in, *Music in Ancient Arabia and Spain,* and in numerous publications in Spanish. Higinio Anglés' critiques of Ribera y Tarragó are found primarily in his publications of 1943, 1958–61, and 1964.

4 Fanjúl 2000, 2004, 2005, 2009, 2012; Fernández-Morera 2016. Although these two authors are primarily concerned with attacking the idea of a "paradisical"

convivencia ["living together"], embedded in their arguments is a deep-rooted belief that Arabo-Islamic and Christian-Iberian cultures remained separate and impermeable. For a nostalgic account of Visigothic Spain as a "nascent civilization" that was destroyed by the Islamic conquest, see, for example, Fernández-Morera 2011.

5 See, for example, Catlos 2004, 2014, 2015, 2018; Cohen 2008; Menocal 2002, Nirenberg 1996, 2014; Pick 2004; and Wolf 1988, among others.

6 The debate produced a large number of publications by the two main protagonists and many others, but some of the key works are Castro 1948, 1954, 1958, and Sánchez-Albornoz 1946, 1956, 1958.

7 Modern Imazighen (Berbers) rightly object to the term "Berber," a label that is of the same origin as the term "barbarian," (i.e., those who do not speak Greek or Latin), and are more and more often urging the use of Imazighen for "Berbers" as a people and Amazigh as the adjectival form, terms which are adopted in this volume.

8 For various detailed explorations of these issues, see Catlos 2004, 2014, 2015, 2018; Cohen 2008; Nirenberg 1996, 2014; Pick 2004; and Wolf 1988.

9 The term "heritage" here has also been chosen deliberately to reflect the Arabic concept of *turāth.*

10 See Reynolds 2007 and Chapter 8 in this volume.

11 For a history of Arab songbooks and their role in the transmission of Andalusi music, see Reynolds 2012; see also Neubauer 1999–2000 for their role in the 16th to 19th centuries.

12 This is, in some ways, a mirror image of the situation in western art (i.e., "classical") music, where it is relatively easy to determine the historical period of a composition, but nearly impossible to detect regional variations in performance. Viewed from a Middle Eastern standpoint, one might well wonder why no regional schools of performance have evolved for the European classical repertory preserved in musical notation from earlier centuries.

13 For recent studies of modern Andalusi musical traditions in the Middle East, see Ciantar 2012, Davila 2013, Davis 2004, Glasser 2016, Guettat 1980, 2000, Reynolds 2000, Shannon 2006, 2015, and Wagner 2009.

14 The closest thing to an overall survey can be found in the works of Guettat 1980 and 2000.

15 Feldman 1996; Neubauer 1965, 1968–9, 1993, 1994a, 1994b, 1995–6, 1997, 1998a, 1998b, 1999–2000, 2002; G. Sawa 2015, 2002, 2009, 2019; Schofield 2012; Wade 1998; Wright 1966, 1978, 1992, 1995, 2006.

16 For a detailed discussion of the question of how to refer to this music and the political implications of this choice, see Poché 1995: 13–26.

Section One

Music in Iberia and the Mashriq up to 711

In 711 the Arabs conquered Spain – except of course that the "Arabs" did not conquer "Spain." The military forces that crossed over the straits from North Africa were almost entirely Imazighen (Berber), the forces they faced on the Iberian Peninsula were predominantly Germanic Visigoths, and the two polities for which these armies fought were multi-ethnic, multi-lingual, and multi-sectarian.

On the Iberian side, a small elite of some 20,000 Visigoths ruled a population estimated at more than a million.[1] During the successive waves of Germanic tribes that had invaded Iberia in the 5th and 6th centuries, the Visigoths had chased the Vandals out of Iberia and across to North Africa, but other Germanic tribes, such as the Suevi and the Alans, remained in Iberia along with the Visigothic ruling class.[2] Beneath them in the social pecking order were the remnants of the Roman land-owning classes with their large estates (*latifundia*), who in many cases were the descendants of the tens of thousands of colonists that Rome had sent over from the Italian Peninsula during and after their military conquest of the Iberian Peninsula.[3] In addition, there were the non-elite indigenous populations, such as the Celtiberians,[4] Basques,[5] and others. After hundreds of years of Roman rule, most urban dwellers spoke a vulgar form of Latin as their mother tongue and were more or less Romanized culturally.[6] However, in the remote mountainous regions and in isolated villages scattered across the countryside there were communities who were far less "Romanized" and may still have been speaking the last vestiges of the many indigenous languages of Iberia, of which only Basque remains alive today.[7] In addition, it is nearly impossible to know the degree to which these more isolated communities were truly Christianized or, whether they, which is far more likely, practiced some syncretic mixture of Christian ideas learned at church and local folk beliefs, rituals, and other forms of worship.[8] Whatever understanding of Christianity was found among the broader population was probably somewhat confused by the Arian Christianity championed and promulgated by the Visigoths, to which they had converted en masse around 370 CE, a few decades before their conquest of Iberia. This form of Christianity was non-trinitarian and viewed Jesus as both separate and fully subordinate to God.[9] Although the Visigothic king Reccared officially converted to Catholicism some 250 years later in 587 CE, Arian beliefs lingered on for a substantial period of time after the official reform of the Iberian Church.[10] On an even lower rung of the power structure were the Jews, who, in the final years of Visigothic reign had been more and more harshly persecuted.[11] Finally, a substantial population of slaves from many different origins, speaking many different languages, served all of the higher social classes. In other words, the population of the Iberian Peninsula at the time of the Muslim conquest in 711 was anything but homogeneous ethnically, linguistically, or in sectarian terms.

On the other side of the straits was the rapidly expanding Islamic Empire, still in many ways in its infancy. It is a common misconception that somehow hordes of Arabs swept out of their homeland and single-handedly conquered this vast new territory. The Arabian Peninsula was a sparsely populated region; there simply were not millions of Arabs waiting to fan out and conquer a region that soon stretched from Morocco to India. Instead, similar to the situation in Iberia, a small Arab elite ruled a much larger population that included many different ethnicities and speakers of a multitude of languages, including Aramaic, Coptic, Greek, Kurdish, Latin, Nubian, Persian, as well as a number of Amazigh (Berber) and Turkic languages.[12] Typically, during the Islamic military expansion, as each new region was conquered, the military advance paused while administrative control was solidified. Government structures such as tax collection were usually left in place and often continued to be conducted in the local language for many years afterward.[13] Then, with a few Arab leaders left behind to govern, and with the ranks of the military replenished with new converts, recruits, and mercenaries, the military conquest would again move onward. In the early centuries of Islam, Muslims were greatly outnumbered by non-Muslims. In this new social order, native Arab Muslims were the ruling class, supported by a larger class of new converts to Islam from many different backgrounds. Those who practiced some form of monotheism, namely Jews and Christians, were recognized as "People of the Book," were given the status of *dhimmī* ["protected person"], and were allowed to practice their faiths freely, on the condition of paying a special tax, known as the *jizya.* Other groups such as Zoroastrians and Samaritans were placed in an ambiguous category, but generally not persecuted.[14] The practice of "pagan" religions that incorporated multiple deities and the worship of idols, however, was not tolerated.

As the Islamic conquest moved across North Africa, it advanced through regions where there was still some sense of Roman culture, which is also where the Germanic Vandals had taken refuge after being chased out of Iberia by the more powerful Visigoths.[15] So it is not inconceivable that the forces that eventually moved westward included a number of speakers of Latin and even Vandal. The Islamic conquest reached Morocco only in the latter half of the 7th century and was not completed until the early years of the 8th century. In the first few decades, military control of the region was consolidated and conversion to Islam began to gain speed, but not without some setbacks. In 710, for example, one year before the invasion of Iberia, the first independent Muslim Kingdom was established in Nekor (or Nakur) in the Rif Mountains of northern Morocco, by an immigrant named Ṣāliḥ ibn Manṣūr, who was either of Yemeni or of Nafzawi Berber origin. He is said to have converted the local Amazigh tribes to Islam, but they apparently grew dissatisfied with the new religion and soon revolted against him, though they later accepted him as their ruler again.[16] Tangiers was conquered in 702, only eight years before the first reconnaissance crossing to Iberia in 710 that laid the groundwork for the more substantial invading force that landed in 711. In any case, at the time of the conquest of Iberia, Islam and Arabic were very new arrivals in Morocco, and it is doubtful that many of the common soldiers who were famously led by Ṭāriq ibn Ziyād across the straits toward that landmark that now bears his name (Gibraltar = Ar. *Jabal Ṭāriq* "Mount Tariq"), spoke more than a smattering of Arabic or had anything more than a very basic understanding of the principles of their new religion.

Thus, rather than think of 711 as the year when the "Arabs" conquered "Spain," we would do well to remember the remarkable diversity of both Visigothic Hispania and the new Islamic *Umma* ("community"). During the years immediately following the Islamic conquest of Iberia, the social order of the Peninsula was completely transformed. Although the political roles and balances of power were changed, all of these diverse communities continued to exist: the indigenous Iberian population (Romanized to various degrees) including the Basques, Celtiberians, and other groups, along with the descendants of Roman colonists from the Italian Peninsula, the various Germanic tribes (Suevi, Alans, and Visigoths), and the Jews. They were now placed in close contact, and began to mix, with North African Imazighen of various tribal affiliations, along with new converts to Islam from many regions who arrived with the invading forces, as well as a rather small number of Arabs, who also had diverse tribal affiliations. The critical point in this cataloguing of various ethnic and linguistic groups is that the socio-cultural mix was highly complex and diverse on both sides *before* the Islamic conquest, and only became *more so* in its wake. And it is fair to assume that many, if not all, of these different ethnic, linguistic, and sectarian groups possessed distinctive *musical traditions*.

History, however, has been unkind to most of these musical traditions. Many have left no discernible trace in the historical record at all. Despite the lengthy and numerous presence of the Imazighen in Iberia, for example, we know almost nothing of their music for the period covered in this volume. In addition, any attempt at surveying this rich mélange of musical traditions runs into powerful biases in the historical documentation. On the Christian side the record is heavily weighted toward liturgical music until the late Middle Ages; but church music unfortunately tells us little about the popular or folk or even courtly music because the Church took great care to make sure that liturgical music was quite distinct from all forms of secular music. If anything, church music is a "negative" or reverse image of music in other contexts, an image of what secular music was *not*.

On the Islamic side, the historical record is comparatively rich when it comes to "secular" music, but the historical record is strongly focused on the elite art music of the courts, while little to no attention is given to more popular forms of musical expression or musical traditions of non-Arab groups. We know a great deal about the famous singers and composers who appeared in the caliphal courts of Damascus under the Umayyad dynasty (661–750) and in Baghdad under the Abbasid dynasty (750–1258). Documentation about courtly music in al-Andalus, however, is unfortunately far less detailed, but nevertheless allows a fairly accurate portrait to be drawn. In contrast, musical life outside the courts is poorly represented in the extant Arabic sources for both the Eastern Mediterranean and Iberia.

Notes

1 Although it was common in earlier scholarship to cite figures as high as 100,000 Visigoths, see the discussions of populations in Collins 2004: 24–5 and 241.

2 For the Alans, see Alemany 2000 and Bachrach 1973. The Suevi established an independent kingdom that lasted for 175 years in Galicia, northwestern Iberia, from 410 to 585, when it was brought under Visigothic rule, see Koller 1998 and Kulikowski 2015.

3 Curchin 1991 and Blázquez 1986.

4 Salinas de Frías 1986; see also Maier 2000: 75–81; and Simon James 1993: 42–3.

5 Collins 1990.

6 See, however, Adams 2007 for discussions of Iberian accents in Latin (pp. 231–9) and Hispanisms in Latin derived from indigenous Iberian languages (pp. 370–431).

7 Anderson 1988 and Jiménez 2001. On the spread of Latin literacy among Celtiberians, see Curchin 1995 and 2004:

> … surviving evidence does not tell us at what point in time the bulk of the population learnt Latin (if it ever did), or at what point Latin became the language of preference; the increasing use of written Latin in inscriptions during the Early Empire is no guarantee that Latin was the dominant tongue of the region, rather than a second language.
>
> (p. 196)

For another study of Romanization in a rural region, see Acuña, et al. 1976.

8 For the initial spread of Roman religions in Iberia, see Curchin 2004: 169–92.

9 This belief is rooted in John 14:28: "If you loved me, you would be glad that I am going to the Father, for the Father is greater than I." See Barnes and Williams, eds., 1993.

10 For the translated text of Third Council of Toledo (589 CE), see Constable 2012: 12–20.

11 Asthor 1973 (rpt. 1992): I, 3–19, and Constable 2012: 21–6.

12 A rough estimate for the Arabo-Islamic empire is about 250,000–300,000 Arab conquerors ruling a population of some 25 to 30 million, see Hoyland 2015: 158.

13 Donner 1981 and Hoyland 2015.

14 Choksy 1987; Khanbaghi 2006; MacDonald 1962.

15 Conant 2012.

16 Charles Pellat, “Nakūr” *EI2*.

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1 Music in Iberia to 711

Although located in the westernmost reaches of the Mediterranean, the coastal regions of Iberia were in no way isolated from the trade and navigation routes that crisscrossed the "Middle Sea" – Phoenicians, Greeks, Byzantines, and Carthaginians all established trading posts and settlements of various sorts in the port cities along the eastern and southern littorals of the Peninsula. Indeed, it was their ongoing rivalry and struggle with Carthage that originally brought the Romans to Iberia in what was the first of the three great conquests that forged what we now call Spain. The Romans, then the Visigoths, and finally Muslims, all succeeded in extending control over the majority of the region, though control should always be understood to have been more potent and entrenched in some regions, particularly urban centers, and far more lightly felt in rural and mountainous areas. It is worth noting that each of these three conquests: (1) brought a new language to Iberia (Latin, Germanic, Arabic); (2) brought new religions (the worship of Greco-Roman gods, then Christianity, followed by the "Arian" Christianity of the Visigoths, followed by Islam); and, (3) introduced multiple foreign cultural features ranging from Roman engineering and urban planning, to Visigothic patterns of ornamentation, to Arabo-Islamic architecture and poetry. From a neutral outsider's perspective, Latin is, therefore, no more indigenously Iberian than Germanic or Arabic, and Catholicism is no more the "natural" religion of Iberia than the worship of Greco-Roman gods, Arianism, or Islam.

Roman forces first invaded Iberia in 218 BCE, but the conquest was not completed until two centuries later in 19 BCE during the reign of Ceasar Augustus (r. 27 BCE–14 CE). The Iberian Peninsula quickly became one of the most prominent regions of the Roman Empire and was home to a number of authors and political figures of renown. The rhetorician Seneca the Elder (d. circa 37), the philosopher Seneca the Younger (d. 65), and the poet Lucan (d. 65) were all natives of Cordoba. The author Marcus Fabius Quintilian (d. before 100 CE) was from Calagurris [Calahorra] and the poet Martial (d. 104) from Bilbilis, near Calatayud. The city of Italica, not far from modern Seville, was the birthplace of two Roman emperors, Trajan (d. 117) and Hadrian (d. 138), and the long list of provincial governors of Hispania includes such well-known figures as Julius Cesar, Pompey, and Constancio Cloro, father of the emperor Constantine.

Though it is tempting to see this as evidence of the complete Romanization and Latinization of Iberia (and many nationalist-oriented Spanish historians continue to do so), when the Greek geographer Strabo (d. 24 CE) wrote his description of Iberia, the region was still inhabited by many distinct cultures speaking a variety of languages, and possessing their own musical cultures. Among the many peoples he mentions are the Turdetanians, Turdulians, Bastetanians, Celtiberians, Lusitanians, Carpetanians, Vettonians, Oretanians, Cantabrians, Vascones (Basques) and others.[1] Although Strabo did not focus on music, he included a number of references to the musical cultures of the various peoples he described.[2]

He singles out the Turdetanians (who lived in the Guadalquivir Valley where Cordoba and Sevilla are located today) as the most civilized of the indigenous peoples of Iberia: "The Turdetanians are ranked as the wisest of the Iberians; and they make use of an alphabet, and possess records of their ancient history, poems, and laws written in verse that are six thousand years old, as they assert."[3] Not only were they blessed with a rich culture according to Strabo, but their region exported large quantities of grain, wine, olive oil, wax, honey, pitch, and the red dye, kermes. In addition to which, they built ships from local timber and possessed an important fish-salting industry.[4] In comparison with their Celtic neighbors to the north, the Turdetanians were thoroughly "Romanized": "The Turdetanians, however, and particularly those that live about the Baetis, have completely changed over to the Roman mode of life, not even remembering their own language any more. And most of them have become Latins and they have received Romans as colonists, so that they are not far from being all Romans."[5]

The Celtiberians to the north had become partially civilized due to contact with the Turdetanians and were, according to Strabo, divided into four large groups. He praises their valor during their twenty-year-long war against the Romans, and notes that their main city, Numantia, was the last stronghold to fall to the Romans in all of Iberia. Among their distinguishing characteristics was their form of worship which involved choral singing that lasted through the night: "The Celtiberians and their neighbours on the north offer sacrifice to a nameless god at the seasons of the full moon, by night, in front of the doors of their houses, and *whole households dance in chorus and keep it up all night.*"[6]

Two earlier Greek authors offer additional mentions of the music of the Celtiberians: an anecdote recounted by Poseidonius (ca. 135 BCE–d. ca. 51 BCE), quoted in Athenaeus, *Deipnosophistae*, 4: 37, tells of a Celtic poet earning a bag of gold for a well-composed song:

> And when at length he [Lovernius, father of Bituitus] fixed a day for the ending of the feast, a Celtic poet who arrived too late met Lovernius and composed a song magnifying his greatness and lamenting his own late

> arrival. Lovernius was very pleased and asked for a bag of gold and threw it to the poet who ran beside his chariot. The poet picked it up and sang another song saying that the very tracks made by his chariot gave gold and largesse to mankind.[7]

The historian Diodorus Siculus (fl. 1st century BCE), in his universal history, 5:31, tells of Celtic bards performing to the lyre:

> Among them are also to be found lyric poets whom they call Bards. These men sing to the accompaniment of instruments which are like lyres, and their songs may either be of praise or of obloquy.[8]

Returning to Strabo, after noting that the Turdetanians were fully "Romanized" and that their neighbors to the north, the Celtiberians, were partially civilized due to their contact with the Turdetanians, he observes that the process of "Romanization" was primarily an urban phenomenon that did not extend to villages in the countryside, let alone to the mountainous regions of the north and that urban dwellers were very much in the minority overall: "[But] those who live in villages are wild (and such are most of the Iberians), and even the cities themselves cannot easily tame their inhabitants when these are outnumbered by the folk who live in the forests."[9]

These mountaineers had their own musical traditions: "They dine sitting down, for they have stationary seats builded around the walls of the room, though they seat themselves forward according to age and rank. The dinner is passed round, and amid their cups *they dance to flute and trumpet, dancing in chorus, but also leaping up and crouching low.* But in Bastetania [southeastern Iberia] *women too dance promiscuously with men, taking hold of their hands*.[10]

The Cantabrians on the northernmost Atlantic coast, however, are singled out for their primitiveness, which is in part expressed by their singing of victory hymns while being crucified: "As for the insensibility of the Cantabrians, this instance is also told, namely, that when some captive Cantabrians had been nailed on their crosses, *they proceeded to sing their paeans of victory* …"[11]

In Book II of the *Geography*, Strabo also mentions that at the end of the 2nd century BCE, the Greek explorer of the African coasts, Eudoxos, stopped in the port of Gadira/Gades [modern Cadiz], where he "put music-girls [lit. female slaves trained in music] on board, and physicians, and other artisans, and finally set sail on the high sea on the way to India, favoured by constant western breezes."[12] The female musicians or dancers of Gades mentioned by Strabo also attracted the attention of a number of Roman authors, including Martial (b. between 38 and 41 CE/d. between 102 and 104 CE), Juvenal (fl. late 1st–early 2nd c. CE), and Statius (fl. 1st c. CE).[13] In several of his *Epigrams* Martial described these dancers and their songs. In the following example, an unnamed owner has sold his female slave Telethusa, who danced with lascivious movements to tunes from Gades while playing Baetian "castanets" [*crusmata*],[14] but he then regrets having sold her and buys her back. The punch line is that she was formerly a servant, but now lords it over him (presumably because he has shown how besotted he is with her and is at her mercy):

> [Telethusa was] skilled at performing wanton gestures
> To Baetian castanets and dancing to Gaditane tunes.
> She could, in palsied Pelias, have roused fire,
> In Priam too, mourning by Hector's pyre—
> Her previous master's kept upon the rack—
> Sold as a maid, a mistress she's brought back.[15]

In another epigram [XIV: 203], Martial describes a young girl from Gades as follows:

> Those tremulous thighs, so delicately lewd, would make
> Even the ever-chaste Hippolytus masturbate![16]

Elsewhere [V. 78], Martial describes "girls from sinful Gades" [*nec de Gadibus inprobis puellae*] as "wantonly shaking without ceasing their lascivious loins in trained measure."[17] And Juvenal describes one move of their dances as follows: "and to applause the knowing girls drop to the ground with trembling buttocks."[18] At the end of his war against Sartorius, when Metellus entered Rome in a victory parade, he was met by dancers from Gades who danced, according to Martial, on "naughty and frolicsome feet" again playing metal castanets [*baetica crustama*].[19] Elsewhere Martial tells us that "a beautiful man is one who artfully combs his curly locks, who smells of balsam and cinnamon, and who sings songs of Egypt and Gades while moving his smooth hairless limbs gracefully."[20]

In short, Roman Iberia was a land of multiple cultures, languages, and musical traditions. To this mixture was later added a Germanic element with the arrival from the 3rd to 6th centuries of Suevi, Alans, Vandals, and finally the Visigoths who ruled Iberia for about two and a half centuries until the Islamic invasion of 711. Unfortunately, our knowledge of music in Visigothic Spain is scarcely more detailed than in earlier periods, primarily because the Church adopted a generally negative stance toward secular music and especially toward dance, and nearly all of the historical documentation that has survived from this period is in Church records of one sort or another. Secular music is almost always referred to as "pagan" or "obscene." The Third Council of Toledo (589), for example, in a harshly worded decree, ordered priests and judges "to root out the pagan custom of dancing and singing obscene songs on feast days and most especially during church services."[21] Isidore of Seville (ca. 560–636) wrote in his monastic *Regla* that monks should be allowed to sing hymns while working:

> If lay craftsmen can continue to sing obscene love songs during their duties and use their language in songs and fables without stopping their

> work, how much more should the servants of Christ be allowed to have on their lips the praise of God and offer with their tongues psalms and hymns while performing manual labor![22]

His near contemporary, Saint Fructuoso, however, took a much dimmer view of music in general and did not permit this practice, allowing only that if they had to do so, monks should sing quietly.

The *Etymologies* of Isidore of Seville, composed around 615 CE, contains mention of a large number of musical instruments of his day, mostly of Roman origin, which provides the first general account of the instrumentarium of Iberia.[23] The list includes harps and lyres [*barbitos*, *cithara*, *fides*, *fidicula*, *lyra*, *pecten*], plucked and struck zithers [*indica*, *phoenice*, *psalterium*], flutes and trumpets [*buccina*, *calamus*, *classicum*, *cornu*, *fistula*, *organum*, *pandura*, *sambuca*, *tuba*], and a variety of drums, cymbals, rattles, and bells [*acitabulum*, *cymbala*, *sistrum*, *symphonia*, *tibia*, *titinnabulum*, *tympanum*].[24] Pride of place in the music of the upper class and nobility, however, was given to the *lyra*, which had a sound-box of wood or other material, and the *cithara*, a larger version of the lyre with strings that could be tuned. Notably absent are bowed string instruments (which had not yet arrived in Europe or the Mediterranean), reed instruments, and lutes.[25]

Jewish communities in Iberia

Dates and evidence for when the first Jewish settlements were established in Iberia are problematic.[26] Their arrival may have occurred before the Common Era, but Jews were almost certainly established in several regions of the peninsula and Balearic Islands in the early centuries CE, as attested in both textual and physical remains, including an amphora with Hebrew characters from 1st c. CE in Ibiza, a tomb in Merida for a man born in Palestine, and possibly in Paul's references to Jewish communities in Iberia (Spania) in Romans 15: 24 and 15: 28.[27] The Council of Elvira (305 or 306 CE) is commonly thought to be the first Christian synod in Iberia, and by this time Jewish communities were already well established, for the relationship between Jews and Christians was discussed at length.[28] No laws (canons) were passed that limited Jewish worship, but several were passed aimed at maintaining the separation between Jews and members of the young Christian community: Canon 16 forbade intermarriage between Christians and Jews; Canon 49 prohibited Jews from blessing Christian crops; Canon 50 forbade Christians from eating with Jews; and Canon 78 prescribes particularly harsh sentences for Christians who commit adultery with Jews.[29] From the pre-Visigothic period also dates what has been identified as a synagogue in Elche (4th–5th c.).[30]

When the Germanic Visigoths invaded Iberia and established their first settlement, ca. 456, their laws forbade them from marrying local inhabitants, a law that remained in force until 572, and even then the desire to maintain a clear separation from the indigenous population remained strong. Almost the only texts to survive from the Visigothic period regarding the Jewish communities in Iberia are the various anti-Jewish laws decreed by kings or councils and a handful of anti-Jewish religious tracts. It is therefore next to impossible to estimate even the size of the Jewish population, let alone their geographic distribution, or other basic data such as what occupations they engaged in or what their political role during Visigothic rule might have been. Indeed, H. Sivan has referred to the Jewish communities of this era as the "invisible Jews" of Visigothic Spain.[31]

Sources for Jewish music in Iberia previous to the Muslim conquest are almost non-existent; however, descriptions of Jewish music from the period immediately following the Islamic conquest may reflect older traditions and practices. We can only note that at this stage of history a substantial community of Jews existed in Iberia who almost certainly maintained religious musical traditions and possibly distinctive non-religious musical traditions as well. It is therefore noteworthy that a number of Iberian Jewish musicians should make their appearance after the Muslim conquest and continue to participate in musical life in both Muslim and Christian realms in the Peninsula throughout the following centuries.[32]

Notes

1 An overview of the cultures of Iberia drawn from Strabo and other classical writers is found in Bendala 2000.
2 The passages cited below are from Strabo 1923, Vol. II, Book Three.
3 Ibid., 13; some scholars think the text should be emended to read "six thousand verses in length" (n. 1).
4 Ibid., 33.
5 Ibid., 59, n. 4: "have become Latins," that is, they acquired the so-called "Latin rights of citizenship," which comprehended more than "foreign rights," but less than "Roman rights."
6 Ibid., 109, emphasis added.
7 Cited in Simon James 1993: 71.
8 Ibid., 52; Diodurus Siculus also offers an account of how the ancient Celts and Iberians became one people, 5: 33–4
9 Strabo 1923, Vol. II, Book Three, 105.
10 Ibid., 75.
11 Ibid., 115.
12 Strabo 1923 Vol. I, Book Two, 381.
13 Fear 1991.
14 On the nature of the "Baetian castanets," see Wulstan 2005.
15 The translation of the first two verses is from Fear 1991: 75, the remaining verses are translated by Fiona Pitt-Kethley in, Martial 1987: 253 [Book VI, 71].
16 Hippolytus is a figure from Greek myth whose story is recounted in a tragedy by Euripides. He scorned approaches by both Aphrodite and Phaedra, wishing to live a chaste life.
17 Fear 1991: 76.
18 Cited in Fear 1991: 78.

19 Moreno 1985: 17.

20 Fernandez de la Cuesta 1983 [3rd ed. 1998]: 70.

21 Ibid., 173.

22 Ibid., 173.

23 Isidore of Seville 2006: 95–9.

24 Stevenson 1960: 6–8.

25 Although lutes, especially long-necked lutes, had been known in the Ancient Near East since Mesopotamian and Ancient Egyptian times, no members of the lute family were prominent in ancient Greek or Roman music.

26 For a review of the earliest references to the presence of Jews in Iberia, see Katz 1937: 3–5.

27 King James Version 15:24 “Whensoever I will take my journey into Spain [Σπανία = Spania] I will come to you.” The idea that this is evidence for the existence of a Jewish settlement in Iberia is predicated on the understanding that Paul was traveling specifically to Jewish communities.

28 A useful summary of the anti-Jewish laws (canons) organized by reign and by council is found in Roth 1994: 27–34.

29 The proscriptions against intermarriage and adultery are not surprising; it is intriguing, however, to note that Christians apparently appealed to Jewish rabbis to bless their crops, perhaps an indication that the young Christian community was struggling to separate and define itself from Jewish culture and rituals. The prohibition against eating together may have been aimed at limiting social contact and bonds, but may also have stemmed from an anxiety about contact with Jewish ideas about food “purity” (kashrut), which the Christian church had abandoned. See Laeuchli 1972.

30 See, however, Walsh 2016.

31 Sivan 2000.

32 The main survey of Jewish music in Iberia, to which I am greatly indebted, is Edwin Seroussi 2007; see also, Anglés 1968: 48–64.

2 Arab music to 711

In the centuries before the appearance of Islam, Arabs inhabited most of the Arabian Peninsula as well as the northern hinterlands stretching into regions of modern Iraq, Syria, Jordan, and Palestine. A number of independent Arab kingdoms flourished for various periods of time, the best known of which are Sheba (Saba) in Yemen and the Nabateans, centered in Petra, located in modern Jordan. After the collapse of the Roman Empire in the 5th century CE, the Arab regions found themselves adjacent to two powerful neighbors: to the northeast lay the Persian Sassanian Empire and to the northwest lay Byzantium (the Greek-speaking Eastern Roman Empire). Between those powerful entities and the Arabian Peninsula emerged two Arab "buffer states": the Lakhmids, closely associated with the Persian Empire, were based in al-Ḥīra in southern Iraq and flourished from around 300 to 602 CE when the last Lakhmid king was killed; and the Ghassanids, who ruled from the 3rd to 7th centuries CE, centered in Syria and were allied with Byzantium. These two Arab kingdoms thrived as centers of cultural and economic exchange that attracted traders, travelers, poets, as well as musicians from other countries. The Persian ruler Bahrām V, aka Bahrām Gōr (r. 420–38) was exiled to al-Ḥīra as a youth, where he was raised under the supervision of the Lakhmid king al-Nu'mān ibn Imru' al-Qays (r. 390–418) and is said to have studied music along with Arabic, poetry, archery, horsemanship, and other subjects;[1] he then returned to Persia at the head of a Lakhmid army and seized the throne after the death of his father. Part of his fame in Persian history lies in his role as a great patron of court musicians.[2] As we shall see, musical exchanges with Persia and Byzantium were to continue into the first centuries after the advent of Islam and contribute to the courtly music traditions of the early Islamic dynasties.

As a result of extensive trade networks and radical differences in topography, the population of the Arabian Peninsula at this time was by no means isolated or homogenous. Although the nomadic desert Bedouin may be the stereotypical image of life in ancient Arabia, a significant portion of the population lived in urban centers such as Mecca, Yathrib (later Medina), Ṣan'ā', al-Hīra, and Najrān. In South Arabia there was constant cultural contact with East Africa, in particular with the Christian kingdom of Axum in what is now Ethiopia. Trade networks to the north and sea-trading routes across the Indian Ocean linked the region to the Mediterranean, Central Asia, India, and even China. The region was also a lively mixture of religious traditions, including Christians, Jews, Zoroastrians, Manicheans, and those who worshiped multiple gods and goddesses, often in the form of idols, similar to the religious practices of the ancient Greeks and Romans (i.e., pagans).[3] A glimpse of the complex and animated interaction between these faiths can be found in the reign of Dhū Nuwās, king of Yemen, who converted to Judaism and adopted judaizing policies in the early 6th century. During his reign he is said to have persecuted and eventually slaughtered the Christians of Najrān after a lengthy siege. According to Arabic, Greek, and Syriac sources, the Byzantine Emperor Justinian I (r. 527–65) urged the Christian king of Axum in Ethiopia (Abyssinia) to invade Yemen and put an end to Dhū Nuwās' campaign. They crossed the Red Sea and attacked Dhū Nuwās, and when it was clear that the Abyssinians were to be victorious, Dhū Nuwās is said to have committed suicide by riding his horse into the sea.[4]

Christianity and Judaism, it should be recalled, were by no means monolithic, homogenous religious communities during this period. In the 4th and 5th centuries, Christianity was in the process of dividing into a multitude of competing churches (Nestorian, Jacobite, Monophysite, Coptic, Arian, and so forth) over such questions as whether Jesus was entirely divine, entirely human, or a mixture of both, whether Jesus was co-eternal with God or God had created him, and whether Mary could be referred to as "Mother of God" or "God-bearer" (i.e., *Theotokos*) if she were a mere mortal. In a series of ecumenical councils, complex theological positions on these issues were hammered out and those who refused to follow the newly advanced dogma were declared heretics and, at times, exiled to the Arabian Peninsula.[5] In this same period, rabbinical Judaism was just in the process of establishing itself, a development that was rejected by Karaite Jews, who at some points may have constituted as much as 10 percent of the Jewish population.[6] The Samaritans (viewed by Jews as a breakaway sect), like the Kara'ites, accepted only the original books of the Hebrew Bible (Tanakh) and rejected the commentaries compiled into the post-biblical oral law (Mishnah) and rabbinal commentaries (Talmud).[7] Thus, in many cases when historical sources report that a community or an individual was Christian or Jewish, it is difficult to determine precisely what version of those religions they adhered to or practiced.

Into this mixture of cultural and religious influences emerged Islam in the early 7th century. Muḥammad was born ca. 570, but his prophetic mission did not begin until 610 when he first began receiving the revelation of the Qur'an, and by the time of his death in 632 the new Islamic *Umma* (community) had grown to encompass nearly all of the regions inhabited by Arabic-speaking peoples. The combined motivation of military conquest and preaching the new faith led to the rapid expansion of the Islamic polity. Within a century of Muḥammad's death, Muslim forces controlled territories that stretched from southern France to the borders of India and China and a small elite caste of Arabs came to be the ruling class over a multi-lingual, multi-ethnic amalgam of peoples that vastly outnumbered them. The military conquest of the Middle East and North Africa and beyond is not without precedent – after all, the Romans and Alexander the Great had controlled similarly extensive territories. What is remarkable about the spread of the Islamic Empire, however, is that Arabic as a language, and Arab culture, coupled with the new Islamic religion, took hold and displaced far more ancient and deeply rooted cultures. Other than a handful of epigraphic inscriptions, Arabic was scarcely a written language before the advent of Islam. Its writing system was still developing and it could not claim to possess a written literature (the Qur'an was in many ways truly the "first Arabic book"). Yet it supplanted literate cultures that possessed centuries of written texts in Aramaic, Coptic, Greek, Latin, Persian, and Syriac. With remarkable alacrity, social elites throughout these regions began to learn Arabic and very soon some of the most celebrated authors of Arabic literature were writers whose parents, if not they themselves, had grown up speaking a different language. The history of Arab music parallels this process of cultural fusion, assimilation, hybridization, and resistance found in the development of Arabic literature and Arabo-Islamic culture in general.

The *Great Book of Songs*

Compared to the situation in the Iberian Peninsula surveyed above, historical documentation about Arab music, particularly from the 7th century onward, is remarkably rich: we have extensive biographies of musicians, texts for the songs they composed, names of melodic modes and rhythms, treatises on musical instruments, detailed accounts of performances and the reactions of patrons and publics, religious discussions of the licit or illicit nature of listening to music, accounts of collaborations between poets and composers, and a great deal of juicy gossip! We do not, however, have any surviving musical notation since notation was used only rarely.[8] The vast majority of this information, however, comes to us from one extraordinary source – the enormous *Kitāb al-Aghānī al-Kabīr* [*Great Book of Songs*] compiled in the 10th century by Abū l-Faraj al-Iṣbahānī (d. 967). Although a number of other texts also provide useful information, such as Ibn Khurradādhbih's *Kitāb al-Lahw wa-l-malāhī* [*The Book of Entertainment and Musical Instruments*], al-Mas'ūdī's encyclopedic *Murūj al-Dhahab* [*Meadows of Gold*], and al-Ṭabarī's *History*, al-Iṣbahānī's work is by far our single most important source.[9] Because of this work's tremendous influence on how we view the history of Arab music, it is worth giving a short description of how it was compiled and its structure.

Already in the 8th century, a rich literature about music had begun to emerge in Arabic that eventually included collections of song texts (with or without musical indications of modes and rhythms), biographies of singers, composers, and instrumentalists, lexicographical works that contained musical terminology, medical texts on the use of music to treat various ailments, philosophical texts, and other genres of writing.[10] Anecdotes about performances and interactions between musicians and their patrons appeared in a wide variety of works of history and *adab* (entertaining collections of anecdotes), and works on music theory soon began to appear as well. As Eckhard Neubauer has remarked, "Music seems nearly omnipresent in Arabic literature."[11] By the 10th century, a very substantial body of works on music existed, documented at least in part by the remarkable "book list" [Ar. *fihrist*] of a Baghdadi bookseller by the name of Ibn Nadīm.[12] Ibn Nadīm cites over two dozen writers who composed works on music and lists 104 specific titles (including 18 treatises translated from Greek) from which only 11 have survived to the present.[13] Even this impressive list of titles, however, represents only a fraction of the total since Ibn Nadīm often refers only to the most prominent works by a given author introduced by phrases such as "he composed many books of literature … and among his books are the following …" [*wa-allafa kutuban min al-adab kathīratan … wa-lahu min al-kutub …*].[14] Here is a sample entry from Ibn Nadīm's booklist:[15]

> **Abū Ayyūb al-Madīnī**: His full name was Sulaymān ibn Ayyūb ibn Muḥammad, he was a native of Medina, and was among the "elegant ones" [*ẓurafā'*],[16] knowledgeable about music [*ghinā'*] and historical information [*akhbār*] about singers. On this topic he wrote a number of books, among which are: *The Biography of the singer 'Azza al-Maylā'*, *The Biography of the singer Ibn Misjaḥ*, *The Book of Singing girls of the Ḥijāz*, *The Book of Singing girls of Mecca*, *The Book of Consonance* [al-Ittifāq],[17] *The Generations of Singers*, *The Book of Modes and Rhythms*, *The Book of Caliphal Companions*, *The Book of the "Elegant Ones" of Medina, The Biography of the singer Ibn Abī 'Atīq*, *The Book of the singer Ibn 'Ā'isha*, *The Biography of the singer Ḥunayn of al-Ḥira*, *The Biography of the singer Ibn Surayj*, and *The Biography of the singer al-Gharīḍ*.[18]

Despite his apparently prodigious output, none of Abū Ayyūb's writings has survived, and he himself is almost unknown to us other than this entry in Ibn Nadīm's booklist. Thus, as rich as the surviving historical record is, it represents but a fragment of what was written and read in the early Islamic centuries on the topic of music.

It was Ibn Nadīm's contemporary, Abū l-Faraj al-Iṣbahānī (d. 967) who compiled the ultimate authority about the history of Arab music, the great *Kitāb al-Aghānī* (hereafter KA).[19] It so effectively gathered together the information from these earlier works that they ceased to be copied individually and have almost all been lost. Al-Iṣbahānī's work has a unique structure and the methodology that he used in compiling his work, although familiar to scholars of Arabo-Islamic culture, is different enough from Western traditions of historiography that it warrants discussion here.[20]

Al-Iṣbahānī began with a famous list of the 100 Best Songs that had first been compiled by the three great singer-composers Fulayḥ ibn Abī al-'Awrā', Ibrāhīm al-Mawṣilī, and Ibn Jāmiʿ at the request of the caliph Hārūn al-Rashīd (r. 786–809), and was revised a generation later by Isḥāq al-Mawṣilī (son of Ibrāhīm), for the caliph al-Wāthiq (r. 842–7).[21] For each song, starting with the three best songs, al-Iṣbahānī first gives the lyrics of the song, and then identifies and gives the text of the longer poem from which the song lyrics had been extracted.[22] After this, he gives a biography of the poet, and for some of the ancient poets he at times includes elements of the history of their tribes. Following this he gives a detailed biography of the singer-composer who set the words to music and who (usually) first performed the song. In presenting this historical information, however, al-Iṣbahānī followed the most rigorous historical methods of medieval Islamic scholarship. For each and every piece of information he presents, he carefully traces the source of his material, noting whether he read this in a book (including even if he read the text in the author's own hand or that of a copyist), or gathered it from living oral sources, in which case he gives a detailed chain of transmission from the original speaker down to his own informant, such as the following:

> *Al-Ḥusayn, son of Yaḥyā, transmitted to me from Ḥammād, who transmitted from his father [Isḥāq al-Mawṣilī], from his grandfather [Ibrāhīm al-Mawṣilī], who said the following.*[23]

Much the way a modern scholar footnotes the source of every quotation, al-Iṣbahānī and other scholars of his era made the attribution of each piece of information clear through the "chain of transmission" [Ar. *isnād*], and if he chose to include information of dubious provenance, he noted this as well:

> *I mention this story here, despite its unreliability, because it is well known among the people and they hold it to be true [...] I have mentioned it here only to indicate that it is false.*[24]

The precision of his historiographical methodology, however, goes even further than this. In his discussion of each element of a person's biography or of a historical narrative, al-Iṣbahānī, like other scholars of his age, often presents variant accounts that he deems potentially reliable. He might therefore give several different accounts about an individual's full name or tribal affiliation or place of birth, followed by varying accounts about key moments in the life of the individual, sometimes indicating which version he himself believes to be true, but other times leaving that decision to the reader. He also occasionally presents "orphan" anecdotes with the indication "I have only heard this from him and not from anyone else." It is not surprising then that in some cases his report on a single song fills more than 200 printed pages.[25]

It is difficult to communicate the astonishing amount of detail this masterwork includes about the nitty-gritty of daily life of musicians associated with the court. We find countless descriptions of performances, negotiations for payment, accounts of the buying, selling, and training of female slave singers, tales of romance, gossip about sex, anecdotes of angry patrons throwing singers who have displeased them in prison, tales of star singers being "discovered" in locations as unlikely as construction sites and small rural towns, rivalry among men vying for the favors of the same female singer, singers who are rewarded with bags of gold dinars or even large estates for a single perfect song, household finances, accounts of picnics and outings, competitions and friendships, descriptions of musical instruments, and so forth.[26] It is hard to think of another work in any language that gives such an intimate and fascinatingly detailed portrayal of so many different aspects of musical life. It also seems understandable that the earlier writings on music, from which al-Iṣbahānī drew many of his materials, soon paled in comparison and ceased to be copied as individual works after having been incorporated into KA. In any case, of the dozens of titles known to us from the booklist of Ibn Nadīm, very few have survived.[27]

Arab music before Islam

Drawing primarily from KA, the portrait of music in pre-Islamic Arabia is one in which music is closely wedded to poetry, which was and remains the most highly regarded art form in Arab culture. If there was a period of development for Arabic poetry, it has been lost in the mists of time, for Arabic poetry emerges suddenly and fully formed in our earliest written records.[28] In the earliest examples known to us, all Arabic verse is already metrical using a system of recurring patterns of long and short syllables. In addition, however, Arabic verse possessed a unique feature – obligatory end-rhyme. Every verse in a single poem rhymed on the same final syllable, and anything that did not rhyme in this manner was not considered poetry.[29] Since end-rhyme eventually became so widespread in Europe that it is at times considered nearly synonymous with poetry, it is crucial to remember that none of the other ancient cultures of the Mediterranean or the Middle East possessed obligatory end-rhyme: it was unknown in Latin, Greek, biblical Hebrew, Aramaic and Syrian, Ancient Egyptian, Coptic, Nubian, Pahlavi (ancient Persian), Babylonian, Sumerian, and other ancient languages. There are some instances where end-rhyme has been used for a few verses in a row in these literatures (particularly in Latin), but it was used as an occasional embellishment, much as a poet uses assonance or alliteration in modern European languages.[30] The crucial distinction is not, therefore, that end-rhyme was totally unknown elsewhere, but that it was not used systematically in other languages and never approached the level of being an *obligatory* feature of *all* poetry, which was true of ancient Arabic verse.

The structure of Arabic poetry is crucial to the history of Arab music, for the patterns of the poetic meters were closely tied to the musical rhythms, and both the meters and rhymes of Arabic poetry created a structural frame that musicians and composers were to conform to for at least the first four centuries of the Islamic era until, in Muslim Spain, the mold was broken and new strophic, multi-rhymed musical forms of the *muwashshaḥ/zajal* suddenly emerged (see Chapters 8 & 9).[31] The Arabic meters were learned by ancient poets orally, but with the sudden spread of the Arabic language into regions of non-Arabic speakers, there was a compelling need for written works detailing the intricacies of Arabic grammar, lexicographical works that preserved the ancient Arabic word-stock, and a systematized account of the traditional poetic meters. This was provided by al-Khalīl ibn Aḥmad (718–86) who not only composed the first Arabic dictionary (*Kitāb al-ʿAyn*), but also the authoritative account of Arabic poetic meters, which went on to influence the meters of several other languages include Persian, Urdu, and later, Ottoman Turkish.[32] It is noteworthy that he also composed a book on musical rhythms (*Kitāb al-īqāʿ*) and a work on musical notes or modes (*Kitāb al-nagham*).[33] Sadly, however, neither of these latter works has survived; if they had, we might have a much clearer understanding of the relationship between musical rhythms and poetic meters in the pre-Islamic and early Islamic periods.[34]

In early Arab culture, singing was considered so primary to the art of music-making that the term *ghināʾ* ("singing") also served as the general term for music; a singer was a *mughannī* (f. *mughanniyya*), derived from the same root letters. The term *mūsīqī* (and later *mūsīqā*), borrowed from Greek, did not enter Arabic until the translation of Greek works of music theory beginning in the 9th century, and for centuries was used almost exclusively in the restricted sense of "music theory" or "the science of music," which dealt with the mathematical calculations of pitches, intonation, and related topics.[35] The other Arabic term for singing was *ṭarab*, from a verb that means "to evoke intense emotional responses in the listener," sometimes translated as "to enrapture." The performer who provokes these responses through performance is a *muṭrib* (f. *muṭriba*). But already in the pre-Islamic period there was also a term that specifically meant a skilled female singer-musician, *qayna* (pl. *qiyān* or *qaynāt*), with no male equivalent.[36] As we shall see below, this term later came to mean a female *slave* who had been trained in music and in other arts of entertainment, but it is not clear whether the *qiyān* mentioned with some frequency in pre-Islamic poetry were slaves or freewomen.

The most ancient style of Arab singing was said to be the *ḥidāʾ* (also *ḥudāʾ*), the singing of the camel drivers or riders (Ar. *rukbān*) who are said to have derived the various musical rhythms of their singing from the gait of the camels they rode. To understand why the very simple *ḥidāʾ* continued to be performed for centuries, long after the development of more highly sophisticated urban musical traditions, one must understand that the ancient Arabs, and particularly the Bedouin, held (and continue to hold) a unique, almost mythic, place in Arab culture. Bedouin customs regarding hospitality, honor, generosity, and bravery were absorbed into Islam and embraced as Islamic. The Bedouin were for centuries believed to speak the purest Arabic (especially in contrast with the Arabic of the cities where peoples of other cultures and languages intermingled freely), so much so that grammarians, lexicographers, and compilers of poetry regularly interrogated Bedouin outside the gates of cities such as Kufa and Basra in southern Iraq, looking for new materials for their treatises.[37] So the ancient singing style of *ḥidā'* continued to be regarded as the purest and most Arab form of singing.[38]

Other than the fact that it was sung without the accompaniment of musical instruments and usually by solo singers, we know very little about it. Were there set texts and compositions that were transmitted and sung by one generation after the other or was this an entirely improvised genre? Was it highly embellished or relatively simple? Was there a particular vocal quality (for example, a very high, tight-throated or nasal quality) that distinguished this style from others? We simply do not know. What we do know is that singers for several centuries into the Islamic era continued to sing this style on occasion, even in the sophisticated caliphal courts of Damascus and Baghdad, perhaps evoking an ethos of nostalgia for their listeners. In one intriguing anecdote concerning a governor who had outlawed singers and musicians as immoral, a leading figure in the community brought him a famous female singer who first enthralled him with genealogical accounts and historical tales, then with recitation from the Qur'an, then with ancient *ḥidā'* singing, and finally with full-fledged "art song" [*ghinā'*], which he found so beautiful that he rescinded his ban on music.[39] The story makes clear that the status of *ḥidā'* singing as a pure Arab art form rendered it unimpeachable in moral terms in comparison with *ghinā'* singing that was often attacked by conservative religious authorities.[40]

In addition to this simple style of singing from the desert there was the *naṣb*, a more sophisticated style that some medieval authors claimed originated with camel drivers/riders, but was also sung by the female singers known as *qiyān,* along with two other contrasting genres, the heavy *sinād* and the light *hajaz*.[41] The Andalusian scholar Ibn 'Abd Rabbih (860–940) explains the differences between these styles as follows:

> Singing is of three types: *naṣb*, *sinād*, and *hajaz.* The *naṣb* is the style of the camel drivers [*rukbān*] and the professional female singers [*qaynāt*]. The *sinād* is heavy and is characterized by repetition [*tarjī'*] and many notes [*kathīr al-naghamāt*][42]; and the *hajaz* is entirely light, and is the style that excites the heart and arouses even the calmest [listeners].[43]

The final type of singing known from the earliest records is the *nawḥ,* or funerary lamentation, a specialized form of singing designed to provoke wailing and weeping among those present. In the pre-Islamic and early Islamic periods, performers of lamentations were mostly women, but also some "effeminates" [*mukhannathūn*], male singers who dressed in flamboyant attire, grew their hair long, and were allowed to sit and socialize with women (about whom more below).

Medieval Arabic historical texts of all types were frequently concerned with the origins of different phenomena, which often took the form of citing the first known person to have done X or Y. Over time, so many of these claims accrued in historical writings that they became an independent genre, "Books of Firsts" [Ar. *kutub al-awā'il*], and music history was written in much the same way. Some "firsts" were attributed to Biblical or mythic figures: the first person to fashion and play a short-necked lute was Lamak (Lamech), a descendant of Cain from the Book of Genesis, whereas the first to fashion and play a long-necked lute (*ṭunbūr*) was one of Lot's people.[44] Other attributions are more historical and may have some basis in fact. After the original singing styles of the ancient Arabs listed above, we read in KA that 'Azza al-Maylā' [KA VIII:186] was the first female singer in the Hijaz to sing al-*ghinā' al-muwaqqa'* [singing built upon a specific rhythm, *īqā'*]; Ṭuways was the first of the "effeminates" to sing *al-ghinā' al-mutqan* ["precise singing"], as well as the first to compose using the *hajaz* and *ramal* musical rhythms [KA IV: 291], and in *al-'Iqd al-farīd* he is cited as the first to sing "graceful singing" [*al-ghinā' al-raqīq*].[45] The first to sing *al-ghinā' al-mutqan* after Ṭuways was Ibn Surayj [KA I: 254], and a particular song composed by Sā'ib Khāthir is reported as the first Arabic song of the Islamic era to be of "*mutqan* composition"; he is also credited as being the first to fashion an *'ūd* [lute] and sing to it in Medina, and also as the first to sing in the "heavy style" [*al-ghinā' al-thaqīl*] in Arabic [KA VIII: 321–2]. In contrast, Ibn Surayj is credited as the first in Mecca to sing Arabic songs to the Persian lute [KA I: 250], which may or may not be the same type of *shabbūṭ* (carp-shaped) Persian lute that Manṣūr Zalzal is elsewhere in KA attributed as being the first to use [KA V: 202].

The terms *mutqan, muwaqqa'*, *raqīq*, and *thaqīl*, however, are all problematic as musical terms. *Mutqan* means "perfect, exact, precise, finished," but what exactly characterized the new "precise" singing from what went before is unclear. Farmer argues that the *sinād* and *hajaz* together constituted the *ghinā' mutqan*: "Evidently it was the *sinād* and *hajaz* that were introduced in the *ghinā' al-mutqan* at the time we are speaking of."[46] The various statements found in KA and other sources, however, do not draw any direct connection between the new "precise singing" and the two singing styles of *sinād* and *hajaz*. The derivation of *muwaqqa'* from the word for musical rhythm, *īqā',* appears straightforward, but are we therefore to understand that women singers in the Hijaz before 'Azza did not sing rhythmically, despite numerous early references to women singing while playing tambourines? Or is this perhaps a reference to a new style of singing that was structured more closely to a recurring rhythmic cycle? Was the "heavy singing" that Sā'ib Khāthir performed a style that he developed or one that came from Persia? In short, the large number of (often contradictory) musical "firsts" attributed to various singers and composers in medieval texts must be understood as part of a larger historical discourse that was deeply concerned with origins, and it should be remembered that in many cases, the authors penning these texts had little to no technical knowledge of music or singing. Although these attributions are fascinating as medieval portrayals of early Arab music, they regrettably do not form a strong basis for reconstructing or understanding music in the pre- and early Islamic periods. It is clear, however, that in the pre-Islamic and early Islamic periods, singers and their listeners understood music to be divided into a number of distinct styles, and from biographical materials, it seems that few singers were able to master all of these different styles.

Musicians in the early Islamic period

Presumably the singers of the ancient *ḥidā',* attributed to camel drivers and riders, were primarily men; however, most of the singers of ancient Arabia who are mentioned in prose and poetic texts dating to the pre-Islamic period are the female performers most often referred to as *qiyān* or *qaynāt* (s. *qayna*).[47] In pre-Islamic poetry, these women are rarely named and usually appear only in the background in scenes where the primary focus is the poet's braggadocio and his accounts of the many nights he has spent drinking, carousing and engaging in amorous pursuits. However, the names of some 20 individual *qiyān* have come down to us preserved in short narratives that were incorporated into later historical and literary texts.[48] Some of these singers were Arabs, others non-Arabs, and they were of differing social statuses: some were slaves who had been bought and sold, many were captives from other tribes who had been seized during raids that brought back livestock and women as booty, and some, especially the singers in taverns (*ḥānāt*), may have been free. Their presence has been documented in every major urban center and region of the Arabian Peninsula,[49] and they performed in venues ranging from the royal courts of the Lakhmids and the Ghassanids, to the homes of wealthy notables and tribal leaders, as well as in domestic settings and in public taverns.[50]

It is difficult to determine from these very brief references the origin and exact social status of these individual singers. At some point in the early Islamic period, however, the term *qayna* came to be applied *only* to female slaves trained in singing. The terms *qiyān* and *jawārī* (s. *jāriya*) are often used interchangeably in early Islamic and medieval texts, with the distinction, however, that the term *qayna* refers unambiguously to a female slave who performed music, whereas the term *jāriya* could also refer to other types of female slaves, concubines, and servants who were not necessarily musicians. For simplicity's sake, only the terms *qayna*/pl. *qiyān* will be used in this volume, except in citations of texts that use the terms *jāriya* or *jawārī*. The social institution of purchasing, training, and then reselling female slaves as singers grew in importance in the early Islamic period and was brought to Iberia with the Muslim conquest.[51]

In addition to the *qiyān*, many professional singers of the first two centuries of the Islamic period (7th–8th centuries CE) are referred to as *mawālī* (m.s. *mawlā*, f.s. *mawlāt*), often translated into English as "clients" or "freemen/freewomen." The meaning of the term evolved significantly over the early Islamic centuries, but was rooted in the concept of *walā'*, which carried connotations of closeness, loyalty, and later fealty. In the late 7th century and early 8th century, the term was most commonly applied to converts to Islam (and their descendants) whose origins lay outside the tribal structure of the

Arabian Peninsula and its hinterlands. As a means of incorporating these new Muslims into Arab society, converts entered into a "client–patron" relationship with an Arab individual, clan, or tribal group.[52] Later, as the Islamic polity expanded, the number of converts quickly surpassed the number of tribally affiliated Arabs and the custom of seeking "clientage" with an Arabian tribe became obsolete, but in the first and second centuries of Islam (7th–8th centuries CE), "clientage" was a very significant and widespread phenomenon.[53] In later centuries, the term was more commonly used to signify a master–servant or even master–slave relationship in which both parties – master and servant/slave – were referred to by the same term, *mawlā*, that is, as parties bound together by loyalty or fealty. In addition to being "clients," some singers and musicians were *muwalladūn* (s. *muwallad*, f. *muwallada*), i.e., of mixed heritage, indicating that they had at least one Arab parent, usually the father. Unfortunately, unless a text gives us specific information about an individual's background, the terms *mawlā* and *muwallad* obscure what we in modern times think of as an individual's "ethnicity." After the first generation of conquests, the vast majority of clients and *muwallad*s were born into and raised in Arabic-speaking households and, again from a modern viewpoint, might be termed "culturally Arab."[54] This process occurred throughout the new Islamic polity and is one of the primary processes through which the conquered territories eventually became linguistically and culturally Arab.[55]

Although a number of names and scattered anecdotes about pre-Islamic singers have survived, as noted above, the earliest generation of singers for whom we have substantial biographical information are those who became famous in the first Islamic century (7th c. CE), whose biographies are the earliest to have been preserved in KA. The varied backgrounds, ethnicities, and geographic origins of the dozen or so most famous singers of this era are striking. It is clear that though its roots lay in ancient Arabia, Arab music was already well on its way to becoming a cosmopolitan tradition that openly embraced and incorporated new elements from many different sources, and adapted them to the exigencies of the meters, rhymes, and form of Arabic poetry. Ibn Misjaḥ, for example, was a black slave who was manumitted by his owner, became a singer and traveled north to study both Persian and Byzantine music: "Then he retained the best of those notes/tunes, and discarded what he found displeasing in the rhythms[56] and tones of Persian and Byzantine music, which did not fit Arab music."[57] The rise of a well-defined social class of professional singers is one of most significant features of the history of early Arab music and subsequently had a profound impact on the transmission and development of Arab music in al-Andalus.

Male and female singers, Muslim and Christian, free and slave, of African, Arab, Byzantine, Amazigh (Berber), Persian, and Turkish backgrounds, all achieved enough fame that their biographies were included in al-Iṣbahānī's *Great Book of Songs*, written some 200 years after their deaths. It is noteworthy that the authors and compilers who collected information on singers and composers were not at all loath to record the many different encounters

Arab music underwent with neighboring musical cultures; indeed, this seems to have been an accomplishment worth boasting about. All of this took place through what George Sawa has termed a “multicultural environment and selective borrowing.”[58] For early Islamic and later medieval authors, it was clear that these instruments, melodies, modes, rhythms, and singing techniques, selectively borrowed from diverse sources, were all eventually put into service as vehicles for the single most important element of musical performance – Arabic poetry. Indeed, this is what makes Arab music Arab – Arabic poetry, its structures, meters, and rhymes – and the musical tradition that emerged from this process was distinct from music found anywhere else in the world.

By the early 8th century, three classes of *professionally trained* singer-musicians were emerging: (1) male musicians who were usually, but not always, freemen (i.e., “clients”), often of mixed ethnic background; (2) female slaves termed either *qiyān* or *jawārī* who were not of Arab origin, but who were often linguistically and culturally Arab; and, (3) a separate class of male musicians who dressed in flamboyant clothes, wore their hair long, at times wore jewelry and make-up, and were allowed to socialize with women, commonly termed “effeminates” [Ar. *mukhannathūn*].[59] In addition to these classes of professional performers, however, many private individuals practiced music, singing, and even composition as amateurs, including members of the Arab nobility and of the caliphal royal family, as is well documented in the special section in KA that al-Iṣbahānī devoted to the biographies and songs “Of the caliphs, their children, and their children’s children.”[60] Very few Arab males in these early decades of Islam were “professional” musicians in the sense that they performed in public to earn financial reward, though many achieved quite high standards in their knowledge and performance of music privately.

Patronage

Although singers and musicians did not play a prominent role in the early caliphal entourages, quite a few members of the Arab elite acted publicly as patrons of both male and female singers. Some were talented amateur musicians in their own right, however they were not accorded separate biographical notices in KA; instead, we find them appearing over and over again in the biographies of professional singers. One figure of particular note is ʻAbd Allāh ibn Jaʻfar ibn Abī Ṭālib.[61]

ʻAbd Allāh ibn Jaʻfar ibn Abī Ṭālib (d. 704), was the nephew of ʻAlī, who was the cousin and also son-in-law of Muḥammad, having married Muḥammad’s daughter, Fāṭima, and who also became the fourth and final “Rightly Guided” caliph. ʻAbd Allāh is portrayed in most sources as a distinguished figure, possessed of gravitas, known for his generosity, and who, as a member of the *ahl al-bayt* (people of the house of Muḥammad), was revered by many of those around him. He was also a great aficionado of music who purchased singing slaves and gathered “clients” around him who had extraordinary musical talent. In one anecdote, we find ʿAbd Allāh and another prominent patron of music, Ibn Abī ʿAtīq, the great-grandson of the first caliph Abū Bakr, arriving at the home of the renowned female singer ʿAzza al-Maylāʾ at the same time as a messenger delivering an ultimatum from the governor of the Hijaz ordering her to leave off singing because "people are in an uproar over your singing and claim that you have seduced men and women [into immorality]." ʿAbd Allāh told the messenger to go through the city making the following announcement: "Let every man who has been led astray and every woman who has been seduced into immorality by the singing of ʿAzza, reveal themselves and make themselves known to us!" When no one responded, the governor quietly let the matter drop.[62]

In another anecdote, ʿAbd Allāh dropped by the home of the singer Jamīla unannounced while she was giving a public concert. As soon as he entered, Jamīla stopped singing and stood up, as did all those present. She rushed forward, kissed his hands and feet, and seated him in the center of the room on a dais. She then ushered everyone else out of her home and proceeded to sing for ʿAbd Allāh and his companions what he had come desiring to hear, a specific song with a text of two verses by the pre-Islamic poet Imruʾ l-Qays, after which he rose and departed.[63] Later, Jamīla decided to throw an extraordinary party solely for ʿAbd Allāh and his closest companions. She decorated her house and arrayed her singing girls in their most splendid attire, then wrote an invitation to ʿAbd Allāh in exquisite classical Arabic, giving voice to her veneration of him and all the members of the Prophet's family. When he and his companions arrived, she first sang a song unaccompanied, which ʿAbd Allāh thought was beautiful, but she then sang it again accompanying herself on the lute, which he found even more exquisite, and then, to top off the performance, she had all of her singing girls pick up lutes, sit on low stools, and perform the song together, at which ʿAbd Allāh declared, "I would never have believed that such a thing could exist! This is something that enchants the heart!"[64] Figures such as ʿAbd Allāh ibn Jaʿfar and Ibn Abī ʿAtīq played an extremely important role in defending the art of music from conservative religious authorities, by publicly patronizing singers and encouraging new developments in composition and performance.

When the fourth caliph, ʿAlī, was assassinated, Muʿāwiya, whose sister Ramla (often referred to as Umm Ḥabība) had been married to the Prophet, seized the caliphate. Muʿāwiya was from the same Umayyad clan as the third caliph, ʿUthmān, and beginning with Muʿāwiya's reign the caliphate became hereditary, and is thereafter referred to as the Umayyad dynasty, which ruled from 661 to 750. The Umayyads moved the capital of the Islamic empire to Damascus and the caliphal court began to take on some of the regal trappings of the Byzantine and Sassanian courts. Muʿāwiya (r. 661–80), however, was very poorly disposed toward music and singing, and at one point even feigned never to have heard a singer perform. One of the most famous anecdotes about ʿAbd Allāh ibn Jaʿfar is the story of how he brought the singer Sāʾib Khāthir with him to the new caliphal court in Damascus and managed to get Muʻāwiya to listen to him by presenting him as a poet who "embellished" [*ḥassana*] his voice when he recited poetry, after which the caliph declared, "He certainly did embellish it!"[65]

According to both al-Iṣfahānī and al-Masʻūdī, public performances of singing to the accompaniment of musical instruments were first introduced into the caliphal court during the reign of Muʻāwiya's son, Yazīd I (r. 680–3), who, in the words of al-Masʻūdī "was an aficionado of music (*ṭarab*), falcons, dogs, monkeys, leopards, and drinking parties."[66] There is little information about music in the courts of his two immediate successors, each of whom only reigned for one year (Muʻāwiya II, 683–4 and Marwān, 684–5), but under the following three Umayyad caliphs – ʻAbd al-Malik (685–705), al-Walīd I (705–15), and Sulaymān (715–17) – music played a prominent role in the court. Major singers of the day were invited to perform in the Umayyad caliphal court, and several *qiyān,* such as Sallāmat al-Qass and Ḥabāba, achieved renown, not only for their singing, but also their influence in the court, particularly during the reign of Yazīd II (720–4).[67]

The military commanders in the far west who led the conquest of Iberia would have had little personal experience of the refined courtly music described here, but when they crossed the straits, they opened the doors to a flow of culture from the East, including the music of Damascus and later Baghdad, that was to have a profound impact on artistic traditions around the Mediterranean.

Conclusion

In sum, in 711 when the Muslim armies first crossed the Straits of Gibraltar to pursue the conquest of the Iberian Peninsula, both Arabs and Iberians possessed rich musical traditions, and both societies were profoundly multi-ethnic as well as multi-lingual. Iberia was a crucible of many peoples including Tartessians, Turdetans, Celts, Basques, Phoenicians, Byzantines, Romans, Jews, Suevi, Alans, Vandals, and Visigoths, while the Islamic conquest brought with it elements of Arab, Greco-Byzantine, Jewish, Persian, Kurdish, Egyptian, and Amazigh cultures.

In Iberia a Visigothic elite that constituted only a small percentage of the overall population held power (shared in part with the Hispano-Roman nobility) over numerous regions, each with its distinct cultural and linguistic heritage. On the other hand, the nascent Islamic Empire consisted of a similarly small Arab elite, followed in power by non-Arab converts to Islam, the "protected minorities" (*ahl al-dhimma*: Christians and Jews), slaves, and non-monotheists, who ruled over an empire that now stretched from the Morocco to western China.

At the time of the conquest of Iberia, the music of the Arabian Peninsula was undergoing radical transformation by absorbing and adapting new elements from neighboring traditions. A new class of professional singers was rapidly emerging, consisting primarily of slaves, "clients," and persons of mixed heritage, for the musical world was a meritocracy in which talented musicians of any background could rise to become superstars and even perform in the caliphal court. At the same time, members of the Arab nobility studied, performed, and composed music privately, while publicly acting as patrons and protectors of singers, staging concerts and competitions, donating large prizes for the winners, incorporating musically gifted clients and slaves into their households and providing them with instruction in music and poetry. With the rise of the Umayyad dynasty, music arrived in the new caliphal court of Damascus and in the following centuries music played an increasingly prominent role in Arabo-Islamic civilization.

In 711, two complex conglomerate civilizations came into contact and one achieved a military victory over the other, which led to a new, and even more complex, mixture not only of ethnicities, languages, and cultures, but also of *musics*.

Notes

1 Despite statements that Bahrām studied music in al-Ḥīra in Farmer 1929: 4, quoted by Guettat 2000: 23, music is not mentioned directly as one of the subjects Bahrām studied in either of the two texts cited in Farmer's footnote, namely, al-Ṭabarī's *Ta'rīkh*, and the *Rauzat-us-Safa* of Mīr Khwānd. See al-Ṭabarī 1967: Vol. 2, 69; al-Ṭabarī 1999 (English transl.): Vol. 5, 84–5; al-Ṭabarī 1867–74 (French transl.); rpt. 1983: 208–9; Mīr Khvand 1982: Pt. 1, Vol. 2, 354.

2 For Bahrām's patronage of court music, see Ḥamza al-Iṣfahānī 1961: 49, where it is said that Bahrām sent a request to the king of India who sent 12,000 male musicians to Persia. Bahrām then sent them out to all regions of his realm, and this, it is claimed, is the origin of the Gypsies [Ar. *al-Zuṭṭ*], translated in Hoyland 2018: 68; see also al-Mas'ūdī 1966: Vol. 1, 287, where Bahrām is said to have elevated musicians to a higher station in the court than before.

3 Hoyland 2001: 139–66.

4 See al-Ṭabarī 1999: Vol. V, 190–1, 194–5, 202–7.

5 For general surveys of the ecumenical councils, see Davis 1983 and Percival 2013.

6 See Schiffman 1991 and Erder 2017.

7 Crown 1989.

8 For an early reference to musical notation, see, for example, *Kitāb al-Aghānī* X: 106.

9 Ibn Khurradādhbih 1961; al-Mas'ūdī 1966–79; al-Ṭabarī in 15 vols. 1879–1901; 10 vols. 1967–; English trs. 40 vols. 1987–2007.

10 Neubauer 2002.

11 Neubauer 2002: 363.

12 Ibn Nadīm London 2014 and Cairo n.d.

13 The figures cited here are from Shiloah 1995: 47.

14 Ibn Nadīm 2014: 441.

15 For a translation of the section on books about music in Ibn Nadīm, see Farmer 1959–61 [rpt. 1997: 400–10].

16 A *ẓarīf* (pl. ẓurafā') was a literary figure of elegance, refinement, and good taste. See "*ẓarīf*" in *EI2*.

17 The opposite of "dissonance" in music theory.

18 Ibn Nadim Cairo n.d.: 217–18; Ibn Nadīm 2014: 456. See also, al-Ḥamawī 1936–8: Book 11, 243–4. Cf. Farmer 1959–61: 44 [rpt. 1997: 407].

19 Ibn Nadīm may have met and consulted with al-Iṣbahānī on at least one occasion since he cites al-Iṣbahānī on the attribution of one particular work: "Abū l-Faraj al-Iṣbahānī told me . . ." [*ḥaddathanī Abū l-Faraj al-Iṣbahānī*], Ibn Nadīm Cairo n.d.: 209. This phrase is sometimes used, however, when quoting from a written work.

20 For a detailed analysis of al-Iṣbahānī's techniques and sources, see Kilpatrick 2003; for a study of his sources, see Fleischhammer 2004.

21 KA I: 2 (all references to *Kitāb al-Aghānī* are to the Cairo edition unless otherwise noted).

22 The majority of songs in this period were fragments of already circulating, longer poems by famous poets.

23 KA IV: 159.

24 KA IV: 157.

25 The second song from the list of 100, for example, occupies pages 60 to 268 of volume I.

26 Distillations of this remarkable material are presented in Neubauer 1965, Berque 1995, and G. Sawa 2004 & 2019.

27 A broader sense of the richness of musical literature in Arabic can be found in the two-volume survey of over 500 Arabic manuscripts up to the 19th century dealing with music compiled by Shiloah 1979 & 2003.

28 Metrical verses with end-rhyme occur even in rock inscriptions in southern Arabia dating to the 5th (?) century, see ʿAbdallāh 1988a and 1988b; see also the discussion in Hoyland 2001: 211–19.

29 Ibn Rashīq (d. 1063 or 1071): "Rhyme is the partner of metre in being a marker of poetry: one does not call it poetry unless it has a metre and a rhyme," qtd. in van Gelder 2012: 175.

30 Sedgwick 1924; Gasparov, et al., 1996.

31 van Gelder 2012: 149–162.

32 Al-Khalīl's work quickly became so authoritative that it became a *prescriptive* text that nearly all later urban poets used as the definitive statement of what was "correct" and the flexibility of oral composition was rapidly lost. For the relationship between early Arabic meters and music, see Neubauer 1995–6, 1998.

33 Ibn Nadim 2014: 71.

34 For studies on rhythm in early Arab music, see Neubauer 1968–9, 1994, and Sawa 2009.

35 A Greek text consisting of statements by philosophers about music, attributed to one Būlus (Paulus), was already translated by Ḥunayn ibn Isḥāq (d. 866) and a work on the mathematical aspects of music theory attributed to Euclid was translated in roughly the same period, Neubauer 2002: 368.

36 For a detailed discussion of the possible derivations of the term *qayna,* see al-Asad 1968: 15–24. Other pre-Islamic terms for female singers and musicians included *karīna* (player of the *kirān*), *musmiʿa* "performer," *dājina* and *mudjina* (from the concept of "trained" or "skilled" according to medieval commentators on pre-Islamic poetry), *ṣadūḥ* or *ṣādiḥa* "singer," *ṣannāja*, "harpist," *jarāda*, lit. "grasshopper" or "locust," and simply *āma* "servant" (see al-Asad, 25–9). In one of the rare places where al-Iṣbahāni gives biographical information about pre-Islamic

female singers, he refers to two singers known as “The Two Grasshoppers” [*jarādatayn*] of ʿAbd Allāh ibn Judʿān simply as his *amatān* “two servants,” KA VIII: 327.

37 There were also negative images of Bedouin as uncouth, flea-bitten figures from the desert, often suspected of being thieves and brigands. One might say that the *image* of the Bedouin achieved and maintained mythic status, while real living Bedouin were often found to be rather odious.

38 Various legendary accounts of *ḥidā’* as the earliest form of Arabic singing and the first to sing it are found in Ibn Khurradādhbih 1961: 18–19; KA 15: 30–1; KA 9: 250 (*naṣb* and *ḥidā’*); Ibn Ṭaḥḥān 1990: 63 verso; Ibn ʿAbd Rabbihi 1940–53: VI, 27.

39 KA VIII: 341–2; for a more detailed discussion, see Reynolds 2017: 213–14

40 There is an extensive literature of pre-modern Arabic texts attacking or defending music, only a handful of which have been studied in detail, edited, or published. A short summary of the main texts on the licit or illicit nature of performing and listening to music is found in Neubauer 2002: 371–3; two such texts have been edited and translated in Robson 1938.

41 In addition, al-Masʿūdī reports from Ibn Khurradādhbih that in ancient Yemen there were two types of singing: *ḥimyarī* and *ḥanafī*, but no additional information about these are known. Farmer 1929 [rpt. 1994]: 3.

42 The Arabic term *tarjīʿ* here might imply that the songs possessed refrains that were sung at various points in the performance or that the musical phrases were repeated.

43 Ibn ʿAbd Rabbihi 1940–53: VI, 27; the parallel passage in Ibn Salama 1938: 19, however, says that the *naṣb* was sung by riders and youths [*fityān*], perhaps a copyist’s error, for al-Iṣbahānī cites two *qayna*s from ancient times who used to sing *naṣb* KA IX: 113. In addition, Ibn Salama says that the *sinād* possessed *al-tarjīʿ wa-l-nagham wa-l-nabr* “repetition and notes and raising of the voice” whereas the *hajaz* was sung in “the evenings [*ʿushiya ʿalayhi*] and for amusement, and was easy [*khafīf*] on the throat” (19) [Robson’s translation of “with which pasturing is done at night” for *ʿushiya ʿalayhi* seems an unlikely interpretation.]

44 Ibn Salama 1938: 9–10.

45 *Ramal* is also the name of a poetic meter, but here the reference is to the rhythm of that name.

46 Farmer 1929 (rpt. 1994): 50.

47 For a discussion of singers in the pre-Islamic period, see Farmer 1929: 1–19 (“The Days of Idolatry”).

48 al-Asad 1969: 69–94.

49 Ibid., 43–61.

50 Ibid., 62–8.

51 Reynolds 2017.

52 Hoyland 2015: 158–64.

53 See Wensinck, A. J. and P. Crone, “*mawlā*,” *EI2*.

54 Gordon 2017: 33–6.

55 Hoyland 2001: 229–47 and Hoyland 2015: 161–3.

56 Ar. *nabarāt*, s. *nabara,* translated here in its more general sense of accent, stress, cadence, but which may be a reference to a specialized musical technique “short notes sung with a soft hamza,” as noted by Neubauer 1994: 375, citing Sawa 1989: 102.

57 KA III: 276; a similar account of studying Persian and Byzantine music is found in the biography of Ibn Muḥriz, who was Ibn Misjaḥ's student, KA I: 378.

58 Sawa 2002: 351.

59 Although it would be easy to assume that these "effeminate" or "transvestite" singers (sometimes termed "queens") were also homosexual, Rowson has demonstrated that this was not assumed to be the case in early Medina, though a century or so later it *was* assumed to be so in medieval Baghdad. See Rowson 1991 and 2003.

60 KA IX: 250 – X: 285

61 For additional patrons, see Farmer 1929: 48.

62 KA XVII 176–7.

63 KA VIII: 197–9.

64 KA VIII: 227–9.

65 KA VIII: 323.

66 al-Mas'ūdī 1869: V, 156 – C. Barbier de Meynard's French translation "Yézid était passioné pour la musique," followed by Farmer ("He was appassioned for music," 1929: 60), is rather stronger than the Arabic: *kān Yazīd ṣāḥib ṭarab*; KA XVII: 300–30.

67 For Sallāmat al-Qass, see Suzanne Sawa 2002.

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Section Two

Andalusi music to the fall of the Umayyad Caliphate, 711–1031

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3 From the conquest to the reign of ʿAbd al-Raḥmān II, 711–822

The conquest of 711 brought new social and religious elements into play and radically restructured Iberian society, but what it did not bring was political stability. From the Islamic perspective, Iberia was, both literally and figuratively, the "Wild West" of the Islamic Empire and the first decades of Muslim rule were chaotic: from 721 to 756, 23 governors were appointed or seized power, rarely lasting more than a year before being recalled or killed (either in battle or assassinated). Many of these appointees were probably considerably less than pleased to be posted to a region so distant not only from their extended families, but also from the center of power. Though some of these governors may have owned *qiyān* or brought a male singer or two with them from the East as part of their household, no documentation of any musical life during this period among the Muslim forces has come down to us.

We can surmise that the various military forces, followed by administrative officers appointed from Damascus, and the immigrants who arrived somewhat later, all brought with them familiarity with diverse folk musical traditions from across North Africa and the Middle East. One might imagine that soldiers occasionally entertained themselves with music and singing during the evening in between battles and marches, and there might even have been some more skilled performers among the troops and the camp followers. Perhaps community leaders in towns that had submitted to Muslim forces found it advantageous to provide feasts and entertainments for their new overlords in an attempt to curry favor. If so, however, these performances have all disappeared without a trace, for the extant historical sources about the early years after the conquest focus almost entirely on military and political history.[1]

Back in the caliphal court of Damascus, however, during this same period, music and musicians were playing an ever greater role in courtly life. During the rule of the remaining Umayyad caliphs, musical performances and court musicians were at times highly favored, especially during the reigns of Sulaymān (715–17), Yazīd II (720–4), al-Walīd II (743–4), and Yazīd III (744).[2] The one hiatus in musical patronage was during the reign of ʿUmar II (717–20), who was of a more pious bent and shunned musical performances. Al-Iṣbahānī notes in KA, however, that ʿUmar was the earliest figure of a royal house for whom he was able to find historical documentation of having composed songs. He was able to locate a total of seven songs, each mentioning the woman's name, Su'ād, that 'Umar is said to have composed while he was the governor of the Hijaz.[3] So it appears that 'Umar's public displays of piety did not preclude an appreciation of music until after he ascended the throne.

In 750, however, the world changed. A provincial rebellion that began in Iraq and western Iran spread rapidly and was able to topple the Umayyad dynasty that had ruled the fledgling Islamic empire from Damascus for nearly a century, establishing the new 'Abbasid dynasty. During this change of power, the ruling Umayyad family was slaughtered with one apparent exception, a young prince named 'Abd al-Raḥmān. 'Abd al-Raḥmān is said to have effected a dramatic escape by swimming across the Euphrates River and then traveling to North Africa to seek protection from the Nafza Berber tribe of his mother. He then daringly crossed over into al-Andalus in 755 and asserted his right to rule as the sole surviving Umayyad. The version of this story recounted in historical texts, and in particular the version preserved in *Nafḥ al-ṭīb* ("The Scented Breeze") by al-Maqqarī (d. 1632), is so dramatic that some modern scholars have cast doubt on its veracity and suspect 'Abd al-Raḥmān either of being an imposter or at least of having dramatized the tale of his escape to earn sympathy and support.[4] In any case, his claim to Umayyad legitimacy was apparently believable enough to attract many supporters, some of whom may simply have been convinced that only a representative of the Umayyad family (real or imagined) held out hope that some semblance of order might be brought to the hitherto shaky and conflict-ridden Islamic rule over Iberia.

The reign of 'Abd al-Raḥmān I (r. 756–88), known as "The Immigrant," (Ar. *al-dākhil*), was one of nearly constant fighting with both external armies and local rebellions. Over many years, however, 'Abd al-Raḥmān managed to impose order on the chaotic and fractious land he found when he arrived in 755. He created a large standing army, oversaw the construction of roads and aqueducts, built one palace in the center of Cordoba and another in the countryside, which he named al-Ruṣāfa, and, perhaps most notably, in 785 he initiated the construction of what was to become the Great Mosque of Cordoba.[5] Amidst all of this, however, there is but one brief indication that he may also have patronized singers, either in private or more publicly in the court.

The *Kitāb al-Aghāni* of Abū l-Faraj al-Iṣbahānī contains an anecdote about a female slave singer known as al-'Ajfā' ("Lithe"), which al-Maqqarī later cited in his *Nafḥ al-Ṭīb* with a few minor changes. In it, one Abū Sā'ib al-Makhzūmī asks a friend if he knows of any superlative singers. The friend takes him to a building with a large room – 12 by 12 cubits with a ceiling 16 cubits high – that is strangely furnished with only two small worn-out cushions, a mattress stuffed with palm fiber, two wooden chairs with peeling paint, between which there are two armrest cushions also stuffed with palm fiber. After a few moments an old woman [*'ajūz*] enters who is described as being freckled or having blotched skin, having "hair like that of a dead person," and legs as skinny as threads.[6] Abū Sā'ib protests, "With all due respect, what's going on here?" But his friend tells him to keep quiet. The woman takes a seat, picks up a lute, begins to play, and then sings so beautifully that Abū Sā'ib later says, "I swear she became beautiful in my eyes. She looked clear and unblemished, and the blotches disappeared from her face." The woman sings songs that so move the two men that Abū Sā'ib tears off the shawl that he is wearing and places a quilt [*shādhkūna*] on his head and begins to shout like a street-vendor selling walnuts and millet. His friend picks up a leather bag filled with vials of scented oils, puts it on his head and begins to dance around, causing the glass vials to knock against each other and break, so that the oils run down over his face, chest, and back! At the end of this description of wild *ṭarab* (a form of ecstasy provoked by beautiful music and singing), the anecdote concludes with the line: "Then ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn Muʿāwiya ibn Hishām of al-Andalus sent word and al-ʿAjfā' was purchased and brought to him."[7]

The anecdote is remarkable in that it describes a female slave singer who is decidedly not beautiful, but is an extraordinarily skilled singer. Dramatic reactions to musical performances are scattered throughout KA and other medieval Arabic sources, with listeners sometimes falling off their cushions, tearing their clothes, disrobing, dancing about, or behaving in other strange ways.[8] In any case, it seems safe to assume that ʿAbd al-Raḥmān purchased her exclusively for her musical talent, and not as a concubine, which reveals an interest in music that is not attested in any other historical documents about his reign. Unfortunately there is no other trace of al-ʿAjfā' or of other singers during his reign.

During the subsequent reigns of ʿAbd al-Raḥmān's descendants Hishām I (788–96), al-Hakam I (796–822), and ʿAbd al-Rahmān II (822–52), scholars and artists of renown began to arrive in Cordoba from the East. Al-Maqqarī, citing earlier sources, gives us a list of 86 luminaries who traveled from the East to al-Andalus, of whom seven were singers.[9] Aḥmad al-Tīfāshī, however, writing in the 13th century, states that it was only under the reign of al-Ḥakam I that singers from the Mashriq and North Africa began to arrive in al-Andalus.[10] The 11th-century Andalusi historian Ibn Ḥayyān states that he read in a book by the poet Abū Bakr ʿŪbāda ibn Mā' al-Samā' (d. 1028 or 1030) the following:

> A number of my teachers mentioned to me that the first singers to enter al-Andalus were ʿAllūn and Zarqūn. It is said that they arrived during the days of the emir al-Ḥakam ibn Hishām, that they did well with him, and were good singers. But their repertory/style [*ghinā'*] has today been lost and is no longer in use.[11]

Unfortunately, nothing more about them is known from other sources. Apart from these two names and the female singer al-ʿAjfā' mentioned above, the earliest singers to be recorded in historical sources are a group of *qiyān* owned by al-Ḥakam I, who were almost certainly trained in the Eastern Mediterranean and shipped across the Mediterranean to the emir in al-Andalus.[12]

Accounts of these singers are found in a remarkable source from the 14th century, Ibn Faḍl Allāh al-ʻUmarī's (1301–49) encyclopedic *Masālik al-abṣār fī mamālik al-amṣār* [*The Paths of Perception among the Realms of the Great Cities*] that contains 18 biographies of Andalusian singers, six of whom were *qiyān* owned by al-Ḥakam I.[13] These remarkable biographies provide not only the earliest accounts of musical life in the Cordoban court, but also the first biographical accounts of *qiyān* in al-Andalus. Because of the great importance of these texts, it is worth explaining the rather unusual context in which they are found, and why they are only now coming to light.[14]

Ibn Faḍl Allāh was born in Damascus, spent about a decade in Cairo working in the chancery of the Mamluk ruler of Egypt al-Nāṣir Muḥammad. He was then posted back to Damascus where he spent much of his life until his death in 1349 compiling the *Masālik*. The tenth volume of this encyclopedic work is devoted to music and is divided into three sections. The first section contains condensed versions of 75 biographies drawn from Abū l-Faraj al-Isbahānī's *Kitāb al-Aghānī.* It is perhaps because these abridged texts provide no new information that the entire volume has been generally overlooked as a source for music history. The true significance of this work, however, lies in the fact that Ibn Faḍl Allāh then offers a series of biographical notices about musicians who lived *after* the compilation of the *Kitāb al-Aghānī* excerpted from a work by Ibn Nāqiyā (1020–92), which has not survived. Then, in the final section of the volume, he offers biographies of singers from al-Andalus, North Africa, and Egypt. These are extremely valuable since no other accounts of these singers have come down to us. Ibn Faḍl Allāh offers the following account of his sources:

> I have mentioned the most famous singers whom Abū l-Faraj al-Iṣbahānī mentioned in his comprehensive book [*KA*] and in his *Kitāb al-Imā'* [*The Slave Poetesses*], and also those mentioned by Ibn Nāqiyā, the Baghdadi grammarian in *Kitāb al-Muḥdath.*[15] I then added to this what I found in other books, and I have selected the most outstanding [musicians] from among them. I have brought together those from the East with examples of those from the West and from Egypt.[16]

Thus, Ibn Faḍl Allāh drew his accounts of musicians of the East from the century after the compilation of *KA* from the lost work of Ibn Nāqiyā, but he gives no clear indication of what his source or sources were for the Andalusian, North African and Egyptian singers, stating only *dhayyaltu dhālika bi-mā naẓartuhu fī l-kutub* [I added to this what I found in (other) books]. Why did he so carefully cite the works of al-Isbahānī and Ibn Nāqiyā, but not the sources he consulted for the final portion of this volume? And what source(s) might Ibn Faḍl Allāh have had at his disposal? It is possible that he did not cite the sources on al-Andalus because they would not have been familiar to his readers in the East, or because he was drawing from a variety of different texts that were not primarily about music, such as historical accounts and literary compendia. If we assume, however, that this type of biographical material is most likely to have been found in a work about music and musicians, then two works, both of them now lost, might have provided him with this information. One of these is the *Kitāb fī qiyān al-Andalus* [*The Book on the* Qiyān *of al-Andalus*], written by Umm al-Fatḥ bint Jaʿfar (fl. 11th c), which she is said to have modeled on the *Kitāb al-Aghānī* of al-Iṣbahānī.[17] The other candidate is the large book on music, title unknown, said to have been composed by Ibn al-Ḥāsib, a 13th-century musician from Murcia; this work was said to rival KA in size.[18]

Intriguingly, these biographies of Andalusian musicians are distinct from the rest of the volume stylistically: when Ibn Faḍl Allāh transmitted materials from KA and from Ibn Naqiyā, he retained the basically clear prose style of the original. Unfortunately – at least for the music historian – when he writes about Andalusian musicians, the texts are entirely in flowery rhymed prose (Ar. *sajʿ*), which often obscures what might otherwise have been the most valuable information.[19] Thus the 18 biographies of Andalusian singers that appear at the end of the volume are all couched in florid, at times downright awkward, *sajʿ*.

There is an additional mystery about this collection of biographies: the 18 biographies break into two groups of nine singers each, with a two-century gap in between the two clusters. The first cluster is from the household of al-Ḥakam I (r. 796–822) and his younger son, al-Mughīra (dates unknown), but the remaining nine biographies are of singers from the 11th century, nearly 200 years later. The most likely explanation for this odd lacuna is that it was also found in Ibn Faḍl Allāh's source text.

Ibn Faḍl Allāh chose not to mention the title or author of the work he drew these accounts from, but there are several observations that can be made about this unknown author: First, s/he was an ardent supporter of the Umayyads or composed this work for an Umayyad patron, for there are a number of passages that praise the Umayyads and condemn the "people of black," that is, the ʿAbbasids;[20] second, s/he was well versed in the history of Arab music, for there are references and comparisons to a number of the most famous singers from the Mashriq who flourished between the late 7th and early 9th centuries; and, third, s/he had access to very intimate details about the private life of al-Ḥakam and did not shy away from rather detailed portrayals of sexual union. No sources or "chains of transmission" are included for any of the anecdotes in these biographical sketches, which might possibly indicate that they were passed down among the *qiyān* themselves, giving credence to the idea that they might have been drawn from Umm al-Fatḥ bint Jaʿfar's work on the *qiyān* of al-Andalus.

The first six biographies of singers from al-Andalus are of *qiyān* who belonged to al-Ḥakam I, followed by a brief biographical notice of one male singer who appeared in al-Ḥakam's court, and then two singers, one male and one female, who were attached to the household of al-Ḥakam's younger son, al-Mughīra. There is, however, something rather odd in the organization of these first six biographies in that they are presented in three pairs with identical or nearly identical names: the first two singers are both named ʻAzīz ("Precious"),[21] the next two are named Bahja ("Delight") and Muhja ("Heartblood" or "Soul"), and the last two are Fātin ("Seducer") and Fātik ("Killer"). It is possible that al-Ḥakam enjoyed the playfulness of owning singers with paired "stage names," but it may also be that Ibn Faḍl Allāh was working from two separate sources and there were in fact only three singers.[22] There are, however, no repetitions in the information and anecdotes cited.

These first six biographies possess a certain thematic unity, for in many of these anecdotes the quality that is most highly praised is a *qayna*'s ability to divine her master's emotional state at a particular moment, and respond to his psychological needs in either poetry or music, for which, if she is successful, she was then generously rewarded. This recurring motif may reflect the personal taste of the author of these biographies, but probably also represents a quality that was highly appreciated by patrons who owned such female singers. In the case of al-Ḥakam, his *qiyān* seem to have practiced a kind of "musical therapy" for this temperamental ruler who is chiefly known in historical accounts as being vengeful and cruel.[23] This motif is clearly shown in the passage below about the first singer, ʻAzīz:

> It is recounted that al-Ḥakam loved a certain concubine whose name was Ḥayn ["Death" or "Destruction"]. He once went out into the countryside when spring had embellished its flowing garments with many colors and adorned the pastures along the edges of the hills. He dismounted when the late afternoon light had grown dim, as if it were complaining about separation from its beloved, and the sun had begun to lower its disc onto the horizon. He had left Ḥayn behind and so he lay awake all that night, his eyelids never tasting sleep, nor his eyes touching slumber. He sent for his female musicians to entertain him during the night with their singing. Now ʻAzīz was a poetess and singer, intelligent, courteous, clever, and a great teller of anecdotes. She grasped the emotional state of her master and what anguished him because of his separation from Ḥayn and the anxiety that had taken hold of him from this sudden separation, so she composed a song using verses from one of [the poets of the tribe of] Azd, namely Abū ʻAdiyy ʻĀmir ibn Saʻīd, one of the sons of al-Nimr ibn ʻUthman […]
>
> She rehearsed it until she knew it well, and when al-Ḥakam called for his female singers, ʻAziz entered through the door of his pavilion singing this song. Al-Ḥakam was so deeply moved that he got off his cushion and said: "By God, ʻAzīz, how perceptive you are about the places of affliction and how knowledgeable you are about the locations of complaint! Who composed that poem?" She replied that it was by a man from among the sons of al-Nimr ibn ʻUthmān. He replied, "By God, you are more worthy

> of it than he is, for you brought it forth as if it were a description of the state we are in!” Then he ordered her to repeat it and immediately sent someone to bring Ḥayn. [Once Ḥayn had joined them,] he stayed on this excursion for several days, which passed as if they were a dream. He also ordered that ʿAzīz be paid 10,000 dirhams and Ḥayn paid her the same amount. After that ʿAzīz was accorded al-Ḥakam’s affection for the rest of his life.[24]

Thus, according to this account, al-Ḥakam had traveled from Cordoba on a pleasure excursion out into the countryside leaving behind a favorite concubine, Ḥayn, but he did bring along several female singers, among whom was ʿAzīz. It is not only the beauty of her singing, but her capacity to sense and respond to her master’s mood that provides the focal point of the anecdote. In another short narrative, we are told that she eventually won a privileged place among al-Ḥakam’s wives and the mothers of his children. We are also explicitly told that she was and remained his sexual companion for many years (a fact that is far more often assumed than actually recorded in *qiyān* biographies). One noteworthy piece of historical information found in this account is that al-Ḥakam did in fact enjoy drinking and listening to music (contrary to his portrayal in other sources), but was very careful to do so only in private:

> It is also recounted that al-Ḥakam once sent for ʿAzīz at the beginning of a day when the sun and his cup were both raised to greet the morning. Now al-Ḥakam never partook of pleasures except in secret, nor did he indulge in drink except behind a curtain, nor did he gather drinking-companions except within his private quarters, nor did he compete in wine-drinking except within his closest circle for fear of the scandal of being found out and due to his aversion from having this become known. He spent the day suggesting songs to her and to the rest of his female singers, tossing down [cups of] wine in private, until night had cracked the glass of day, and satiation appeared in his eyes […] Then al-Ḥakam said, “Is there anyone among you who can compose a fitting poem for this moment?” ʿAzīz spontaneously composed the following verses:
>
> *The day has elapsed except for the last remains*
> *of the rays of the late afternoon.*
> *Darkness approaches us from the East—*
> *Welcome to it, the best of guests!*
> *May this sweet moment last as long*
> *as the hoped for longevity of al-Ḥakam, our valiant lord.*
>
> Her poem pleased him greatly and he bestowed and lavished gifts upon her. Then he ordered her to set it to music, so she composed a melody for it and sang it all that night while he drained cups one after the other listening to it and urging her on until the red of the rising sun set the

> coal of the night ablaze. When he began to desire to retire to his private quarters in order to recline on his bed, and allow his drunkenness to take its course, he ordered that ʿAzīz be given 10,000 dirhams and lengths of rich fabric. He increased her salary and transferred her to the elite of his concubines and the mothers of his children, and she remained thus, until she died, his companion in his bed and on his pillow.[25]

Although ʿAzīz apparently never gave him a son, at which point she would have become an *umm walad* ("mother of a son"), a fact that most likely would have been noted, it is clear that she remained one of the emir's closest female companions for many years.[26]

This biographical notice of ʿAzīz offers us very personal glimpses of the private life of the ruler al-Ḥakam as well as a better understanding of the role the *qiyān* played in it. There is, however, an anomaly in this text. After the opening passage and before the first anecdote about al-Ḥakam's concubine Hayn, there appear three song texts, introduced only with the phrase, "And among her songs are…" The first song consists of three verses by Muslim ibn al-Walīd (748–823), and the second and third songs are by Ibn al-Rūmī (836–96).[27] But if ʿAzīz was a singer for al-Ḥakam ibn Hishām who died in 822, how could she have composed songs for him based on the poetry of Ibn al-Rūmī, who was not born until 836? One possible explanation is that these three song texts, which are not accompanied by anecdotes as the others are, have been interpolated by either the compiler or a later copyist. For the moment, at least, the question remains unresolved.

The second biographical notice is of a *qayna* also named ʿAzīz (or perhaps Gharīr as in the BN ms. and al-Jubūrī). After a very flowery introduction that praises her beauty and the elegance of her singing, there appears an anecdote in which al-Ḥakam becomes quite taken with one of his concubines, but then had a falling out with her. In his bad mood, he asked his female singers to perform for him, and when their performance [*nawba*] had ended, this second ʿAzīz stepped forward and sang one last song that motivated al-Ḥakam to reconcile with the concubine, and ʿAzīz brought her to him.[28]

Al-Ḥakam was also apparently quite fond of holding contests among his *qiyān* – in one anecdote he challenges them to create a musical setting for some verses by the poet al-Farazdaq. Muhja wins the competition and requests an unusual reward:

> They composed musical settings for these verses, created melodies and set the rhythms, but Muhja struck closest to what was in his soul. He said to her, "Tell me what you would like as your reward." She replied, "I want the other women to sing nothing but my compositions all day long." He ordered them to do so and told her to teach them until they had memorized her songs. Then they sang only her songs to him that whole day and he bestowed on her a generous reward and conferred gifts on the other women as well.[29]

In another competition, al-Ḥakam challenges his *qiyān* to compose a song using a love poem by one of the "Arab lovers of ancient times" that would communicate the poet's situation to him and bring the poet's state into his own heart. Bahja eventually wins the competition. The emir was ecstatic and declared, "This is what I have been striving and searching for!" whereupon he "rewarded her for all that she sang and granted her all that she desired."[30]

An anecdote featuring another singer, Fātik, offers a strikingly intimate scene between the ruler and his female slave:

> It is said that al-Ḥakam came to her while she was sleeping, her eyelids were kohled with slumber, the surface of her cheeks were burnished, and the stupor of pampering cushioned her right and left. She had pushed away the covers, revealing what was beneath her veils and gowns, her forehead was crowned with pearls of sweat, beauty was gathered together in her in perfect harmony. So he stole a kiss from her and ate the sweetness he found in the bowl of her cheek, then clasped her to himself, he pressed against her between her breast and her necklace, but she did not awaken, as though she were drugged. She did not withdraw from his touch, as if she were a bound captive, and he continued to kiss her and caress her there on her bed, taking no pity on her suffering until the rose of her lips was parched [wilted]. He clutched at the clusters of her side curls, and she was taken as if she were a frightened gazelle. Then she rose and shook herself as if she were a branch of the ban tree covered with raindrops, and said:
>
> *The one who is permitted to kiss and uncover my cheek,*
> *has stolen my saliva and parched my rosy-lips.*
> *How I wish he who came to me at the end of the night,*
> *had been my companion from its beginning.*
>
> "How beautiful you are when you rise, and how beautiful you are when you compose poetry!" said al-Ḥakam. He then ordered her to sing these verses. She sang them and continued repeating the song, with him asking her to sing again and again, enjoying it and delighting in it, until it became a day to be remembered, like a feast-day in which there was no fault, except that we were not there to witness it![31]

These little-known biographies of al-Ḥakam's *qiyān* offer some remarkably intimate scenes at which no other males were present. If they are true, then they were presumably recounted orally by the female singers themselves until they were eventually written down and preserved. This is not unbelievable, for the anecdotes are all of the type that one might imagine a singer recounting to other women, singers and non-singers, and it is perhaps for this reason that most of these anecdotes vaunt the ability of a good singer to respond to the private emotional needs of her master. Taken together, however, these anecdotes offer a remarkable contrast with the general portrayal of al-Ḥakam I as an utterly ruthless and autocratic ruler that is found in other sources.

All of the songs composed by these six *qiyān,* other than the ones they composed to their own extemporized poems, are settings of verses by Eastern Arab poets, and the scattered musical indications for rhythms and melodic modes all refer to those known in the East. These singers were most likely trained in Medina, and at this early date, not yet one century after the conquest, there is no trace of an Andalusi style or repertory in either the poetry or the melodies of their songs.[32]

Music in the household of al-Mughīra

Ibn Faḍl Allāh also provides biographies of two singers attached to al-Mughīra, the younger son of al-Ḥakam. The first is of a female slave singer named Raghd ("Carefree"), who not only set poems by other poets to music, but also composed her own verses and set those to music. After a flowery description of her beauty, Ibn Faḍl Allāh reports that she "lorded it over al-Mughīra" [*kānat ḥākima ʻalā al-Mughīra*], was the perfection of *adab*, with complete command of the art of *ṭarab*, and highly skilled in poetry and songs. He provides six examples from her most famous songs with lyrics composed by herself and by Arab poets from the East.[33]

The second biography is of a male singer named Sulaym and is of great historical interest for it provides the earliest documentation of musical contact and exchange between the Christian North and the Muslim South. The main anecdote recounted in this biography takes place while al-Ḥakam I (d. 822) is still alive, but al-Mughīra has reached adulthood and has his own musicians, so the event can be dated fairly precisely to the first two decades of the 9th century.

Sulaym was both a singer and a composer and he is introduced as the *mawlā* of al-Mughīra, a term that in this time period carries a certain amount of ambiguity. It is possible that the term *mawlā* here indicates that Sulaym was a convert to Islam and was understood to be a "client" of al-Mughīra, or it could simply mean that he was attached to al-Mughīra's household. The brief biography offers two indications of his social status – first, he is said to have mixed with the highest level of society (this is, in fact, the primary characteristic cited by the biographer and is featured prominently at the beginning of the text), and second, he was ordered to host a delegation of Christian emissaries from the north. The text contains a number of ambiguous points where it is not exactly clear who is intended by "he" and "him." Here is one interpretation of this passage:

> **Sulaym, a client [*mawlā*] of al-Mughīra ibn al-Ḥakam**: A man who was fortunate in his patrons and who ascended until he saw the stars draw near; they [his patrons] allowed him to mingle with them and considered him one of their own [lit. "they mixed him in their *nasab* and reckoned

> him as one of their *ḥasab*"]. He learned singing [*ṭarab*] from emissaries [*rusul*] who came to him [al-Ḥakam] from the Christians [*al-naṣārā*]. He [al-Ḥakam] ordered [or: it was ordered] that they be delayed and he [Sulaym] was put in charge of them until their departure. He mastered their art and learned it thoroughly. Then al-Mughīra, son of al-Ḥakam, was brought an Iraqi singing girl who had been selected for him from the women's quarters [. . .] She taught him [Sulaym] [Iraqi] singing [*ghināʾ*] until he became proficient and he then added the Iraqi singing to what he had gathered [from the Christians]. Sessions featuring the two of them took place in the gathering [*majlis*] of al-Mughīra more delicate than dawn breezes and more aromatic than fragrant trees.[34]

It appears then that Sulaym was a musician in the household of al-Mughīra, but one who socialized with his patrons rather freely and nearly as an equal – according to the text, his patrons quite literally considered him one of their own lineage [*nasab* and *ḥasab*]. A Christian delegation then comes to "him" – the text does not specify who, but since al-Mughīra is still young at this point, and he is the younger of al-Ḥakam's sons, it seems logical that they have come as emissaries to al-Ḥakam. Orders are given for the delegation to extend their stay, and they are placed in the charge of Sulaym, who takes advantage of their presence to learn their music. Why were the Christians hosted by Sulaym, a musician and a servant of some sort, albeit one who had achieved rather high standing? One explanation might be that Sulaym was a convert to Islam, or of Christian background, and therefore spoke Romance. If the Christian delegation included some professional musicians, or the members of the delegation proved to be skilled, though not professional, musicians, this too might offer an explanation; indeed, their musical abilities may have been the reason for their prolonged stay in Cordoba.

In any case, Sulaym is said to have mastered their music, the texts of which would have been either in Romance or in Latin. The Arabic term used here, *ṭarab*, is noteworthy, for it is one of several different terms used for music (the other most common term being *ghināʾ*, "singing"), but is one that refers to the type of interactive ecstasy created between a performer and his/her listeners through the beauty of their singing and/or the beauty of recited poetry. It is also the term that generates one of the words for singer, *muṭrib* (someone who performs *ṭarab*) that some scholars have posited as the origin for the Romance term *troubadour*.[35] The text even just to this point would be of great historical interest because it is the first historically documented musical exchange between the Christian North and the Muslim South in Iberia. But what happens next is even more remarkable. Al-Mughīra is sent or obtains a female slave singer from Iraq, presumably from Baghdad, who has apparently arrived with the equivalent of the "top hits" from the East. Al-Mughīra brings Sulaym and the female singer together and she teaches Sulaym the new repertory and/or techniques from Iraq. And Sulaym then combines the two!

> *wa-jamaʻa min al-ghināʼ al-ʻirāqī maʻa mā jamaʻa*[36]
> وجمع من الغناء العراقي مع ما جمع

There is a some ambiguity in the Arabic because the phrase *jamaʻa X maʻa Y* might mean that he simply "brought X and Y together," that is, he might have added the Iraqi music to the music he had learned [i.e., from the Christians and/or the music he knew earlier], in the sense that he added this new material to his repertory but kept them separate. It could equally, however, mean that he "combined X with Y," in the sense that he created a hybrid style by combining them. Unfortunately, the precise nature of what happened is unknowable, and we are only told that Sulaym and the unnamed female singer proceeded to achieve fame performing together in gatherings that were hosted by al-Mughīra. In any case, it appears that Sulaym was a highly accomplished singer who knew several repertories or styles: the music he performed before the arrival of the Christians, the music he learned from the Christians, the music he learned from the singing girl from Iraq, and, possibly, a hybrid style that he himself created. Ultimately, this brief anecdote offers remarkable historical documentation of contact and co-mingling of musical traditions in Cordoba already in the first decades of the 9th century.

NOTE: When the present volume was already in press, a new publication came to my attention, *Höfische Musikkultur im klassichen Islam: Ibn Faḍlallāh al-ʻUmarī (gest. 749/1349) über die dichterische und musikalische Kunst der Sängerskavinnen* (Brill, 2019). The author, Yasemin Gökpinar, briefly makes an argument (p. 69) based upon the anachronistic reference to Ibn al-Rūmī discussed above (**p. 52**) that, instead of al-Ḥakam I ibn Hishām (r. 780–822) and his son al-Mughīra, the ruler in question must be either Hishām II ibn al-Ḥakam (r. 976–1013) and his paternal uncle al-Mughīra, or al-Ḥakam II ibn ʻAbd al-Raḥmān (r. 961–76) and his brother or half-brother al-Mughīra. Despite the fact that the extant manuscripts are in agreement on the names of al-Ḥakam ibn Hishām and his son, al-Mughīra, this is a potentially plausible explanation. If this is the case, then the singers discussed in this chapter would have lived in the 10th rather than the 9th century.

Notes

1 For the early history of the conquest and its aftermath drawn from Christian/Latin sources, see Collins 1989; rpt. 1994, 1995, 1998; for studies of the most important primary Arabic sources, see David James 2009 & 2011, and Clarke 2012. The 10th-century Arabic history by Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad al-Rāzī (888–955), exists only in a Portuguese translation that dates to around 1300, see al-Rāzī 1975.

2 For the rather substantial reign of Hishām (724–43), almost no information for or against musical performances has survived, other than references to the existence of court musicians. See Farmer 1929: 63–4.

3 KA VIII: 250–1 – *Fa-awwal man duwwinat lahu ṣanʿatun minhum [al-khulafāʾ wa-awlāduhim] ʿUmar ibn ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz* [The first among the caliphs and their descendants from whom a composed song has been recorded is ʿUmar ibn ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz]. The lyrics along with the modes and rhythms of five of ʿUmar's songs appear in KA VIII: 251–3; al-Iṣbahānī does, however, note that some persons disputed the attribution of these songs to ʿUmar.

4 In al-Maqqarī's account, ʿAbbasid horsemen surround ʿAbd al-Raḥmān and his younger brother, Yaḥyā, so they throw themselves into the river and begin to swim across. The horsemen convince Yaḥyā to come back by promising him that his life will be spared, but promptly cut off his head as soon as they get hold of him. Al-Maqqarī's rendition is recounted in the first person and includes ʿAbd Raḥmān's poignant pleas, "O brother, you will be killed! Come back to me! Come back to me!" that tragically failed to dissuade his brother from returning to the shore (al-Maqqarī 1968, III: 28). Although al-Maqqarī's history of al-Andalus was not written until the early 17th century, he quotes extensively from many much earlier texts that have since been lost, so it remains one of the most important Arabic sources for the history of Muslim Spain.

5 See Kennedy 1996: 30–8, for an overview of ʿAbd al-Raḥmān's reign.

6 The Arabic term *kalfāʾ* can refer to a reddish color, speckles, spots, or skin blemishes.

7 KA XXIII: 285–8 (Beirut: Dār al-Thaqāfa, 1961); al-Maqqarī 1968: III, 141–2. Among other small changes, al-Maqqarī omits the phrase "old woman" [*ʿajūz*] and in place of "walnuts and millet" substitutes "green beans" [Ar. *al-lūbiyā*].

8 See, for example, the description of a song so beautiful that it caused the caliph Hārūn al-Rashīd to dance around and his attendant to beat his head against a wall, KA X: 179, or the scene in which a respected religious judge of Medina removes his sandals and hangs them from his ears while crawling around the room on all fours shouting that he is ready to be sacrificed at the Kaʿba (al-Masʿūdī 1861–77: V, 428–431). G. Sawa 2015 cites 495 passages in KA referring to various forms of *ṭarab.*

9 The singers were ʿAllūn, Zarqūn, Qamar, Faḍl, Qalam, al-ʿAjfāʾ, and Ziryāb; it is also possible that ʿĀbida, a female slave renowned for her knowledge of the religious sciences, was also a singer (al-Maqqarī 1968: 122–33, 139–42).

10 al-Ṭanjī 1968: 114; Liu and Monroe 1989: 42.

11 Ibn Ḥayyān 2003: 330; 2001: 211.

12 See Reynolds 2017.

13 The tenth volume of Ibn Faḍl Allāh's *Masālik al-abṣār,* which deals with music, is available in three Arabic editions: Sarīḥī 2003; Khashaba 2005; and Jubūrī 2010. These editions are based on various combinations of the three known manuscripts: Istanbul Topkapısaray Ahmed III, 2797/10 – hereafter TK; Paris B.N. arabe 5870 – hereafter BN; Aya Sophia 3423 – hereafter AS (published in facsimile by Fuat Sezgin and Eckhard Neubauer, Frankfurt-am-Main 1988). My thanks to Eckhard Neubauer for making copies of the Topkapısaray and Paris manuscripts available to me.

14 To the best of my knowledge, the only examination of this source as musical history is ʿAbbās 1963; however, this was written based solely upon the Topkapısaray ms.

15 This work, now lost, was variously known as *al-Muḥdath fī al-Aghānī* or *Kitāb al-Aghānī al-Muḥdath*.

16 *Masālik,* ed. Jubūrī 2010: Vol. X, 15.

17 See *Biblioteca de al-Andalus* 2004–17: I, 342–3.

18 According to the 13-century author Aḥmad al-Tīfāshī; see al-Ṭanjī 1968: 115, also Liu and Monroe 1989: 42.

19 It cannot be determined if the original source was entirely in rhymed prose or if Ibn Faḍl Allāh extracted the materials and reworked them into *saj‘* himself.

20 Black was the color of the Abbasid regime that overthrew the Umayyads of Damascus and later moved the capital of the Islamic Empire to Baghdad.

21 The Aya Sofia and Topkapı mss. list both of the first two singers as ‘Azīz; in the later Bibliothèque Nationale ms. the second name has been changed to *Gharīr* – "Naïve" (a change of the placement of dots in the Arabic script); this would in fact make more sense and fits the paired pattern of the other names. Of the Arabic printed editions, only al-Jubūrī has followed the BN ms. in this.

22 ‘Abbās 1968: 4 conflates these without any explanation and says that the three female slave singers of al-Ḥakam were: ‘Azīz, Bahja (or Muhja), and Fātin.

23 In Arabic he is known as al-Ḥakam al-Rabaḍī for his brutal suppression of a revolt in the Rabaḍ district of Cordoba in 818; É. Lévi-Provençal's depiction of al-Ḥakam as "autocratic and vindictive" characterized by "pitiless cruelty" is typical for western scholarship, Lévi-Provençal 1950: I, 185.

24 Ibn Faḍl Allāh, *Masālik*, Khashaba, 466; Jubūrī, 414–15; Sarīḥī, 576–7. The three editions and three mss. differ on many details, but I have in general followed Khashaba, who gives the soundest readings.

25 *Masālik*, ed. Khashaba, 467; Jubūrī, 415–16; Sarīḥī, 577–8.

26 C. de La Puente 2013: 27–44.

27 Two other songs are included in her biographical entry – one of six verses by Abū ‘Adiyy ‘Āmir ibn Sa‘īd, *ṭawīl*/rhythm unmarked; and the last of three verses of her own composition (rhythm unmarked).

28 *Masālik*, ed. Khashaba, 468–9; Jubūrī, 416–17; Sarīḥī, 579.

29 *Masālik*, ed. Khashaba, 476–7; Jubūrī, 423; Sarīḥī, 588–9.

30 *Masālik*, ed. Khashaba, 470–1; Jubūrī, 418–19; Sarīḥī, 588–92.

31 *Masālik*, Khashaba, 481–2; Jubūrī, 427–8; Sarīḥi, 595

32 See discussion in ‘Abbas 1963: 7–8.

33 *Masālik*, ed. Khashaba, 483–6; Jubūrī, 429–30; Sarīḥī, 597–601.

34 *Masālik*, ed. Khashaba, 486–8; Jubūrī, 431–3; Sarīḥī, 601–4. The remaining portion of the biography contains the lyrics to two of Sulaym's compositions – the first by the poet al-Aḥwaṣ ibn Muḥammad al-Anṣārī, the musical setting of which was in the rhythm of *thānī al-ramal*, and the second is labelled merely *madīḥ* (i.e., praise to the Prophet Muḥammad), followed by an anecdote in which al-Ḥakam asks Sulaym to compose a song to verses by al-Musayyib ibn ‘Alas ibn Mālik, which he does and thereupon receives as a reward a shawl [*miṭraf*] in violet silk lined with marten fur and two hundred dinars.

35 See the discussion in Menocal 1987.

36 Thus in *Masālik* AS, BN, Sariḥī, and Jubūrī; the word *ma‘a* is missing in Khashaba, perhaps because it appears in garbled form in TK: *wa-jama‘a min al-ghinā’ al-‘irāqī maḥma‘an* [sic] *jama‘a*

4 ‘Abd al-Raḥmān II and Ziryāb, 822–852

The year 822 marks a watershed moment in the musical culture of al-Andalus. In this year the emir al-Ḥakam I passed away and his older son, ‘Abd al-Raḥmān, ascended the throne. While still alive, al-Ḥakam had designated ‘Abd al-Raḥmān his successor and ordered the Arab nobles to swear to support him. Those swearing the oath of allegiance included al-Mughīra, ‘Abd al-Raḥmān’s younger brother, though it is not clear how willingly he did so. In any case, it appears that al-Ḥakam had inculcated in both of his sons a love of music, for historical sources portray them as avid patrons and owners of singers and musicians. Unlike their father, however, ‘Abd al-Raḥmān and al-Mughīra brought their passion for music out into the open and both of their households soon became the sites of public concerts and performances. This may be one of the reasons that the 11th-century Andalusi historian Ibn Ḥayyān (987–1075), the most important historian of the reign of ‘Abd al-Raḥmān II, wrote in *al-Muqtabis* [lit. “The Quoter”], his most wide-ranging work on the history of al-Andalus, that he was “The first of the Umayyad caliphs to give glory to the monarchy in al-Andalus.”[1]

If music had been a private pleasure during the reign of al-Ḥakam, during the reign of his son and successor ‘Abd al-Raḥmān II, it became a publicly acknowledged passion of the emir. ‘Abd al-Raḥmān made a name for himself among Andalusi historians as a great lover of women: “Among the caliphs, he was the one who was most desirous of women and the fondest of sex, acquiring expensive slaves and selecting them after investigating their origins, class, education, and conduct. He never took any who was not a virgin, even if she surpassed the other women of her era in beauty and excellence.”[2] He was equally renowned, however, for his love of music and his patronage of musicians, singers and composers, the females of whom were slaves [*qiyān* and *jawārī*], though the males were all free. Ibn Ḥayyān quotes the 10th-century historian ‘Īsā ibn Aḥmad al-Rāzī (d. 989) in this regard:

> The Emir ‘Abd al-Raḥmān ibn al-Ḥakam was a great admirer of singing. He was enamored of listening to it and placed it above all his other pleasures. He patronized singers who competed in it and favored the best of them. He sought out the most skillful among them by inquiring

> after those who were most accomplished, and he directed his generosity exclusively to his singers with liberal gifts, extensive accommodations, and constant support. He offered them all that his palace and his private orchestra [*sitāra*][3] contained in the way of skillful female singers [*qiyān*] and excellent singing slave girls [*jawārī*]. He selected the best among these women and sent them to the male singers he had taken into his service so that these latter could be their guides in this art, transmitting their artistry to his female singers. He was constantly in search of greater gratification in listening to music, always guided by the pursuit of excellence. There are entertaining anecdotes about him in this regard.[4]

Thanks to the biographical materials compiled and preserved by Ibn Ḥayyān, several of these singers are known to us. One of ʻAbd al-Raḥmān's favorite female singers was known by the "stage name" of Faḍl ("Graciousness" or "Refinement"). She was one of many female slave singers who bore the sobriquet "the Medinese." This title did not indicate a singer's origin, but rather that she was trained in Medina, which was, from the late 7th to the 9th century, the primary center for the training and export of female slave singers [*qiyān*]. She had been purchased for the emir ʻAbd al-Raḥmān along with a second "Medinese" singer, ʻAlam ("Mark of distinction"):

> Faḍl, the companion of ʻAlam the Medinese, was surpassingly beautiful, skilled in singing, and of refined manners. It is said that she had belonged to one of the daughters of the caliph Hārūn al-Rashīd, was of Baghdadi origin and education, and from there had gone to Medina where her singing skills improved.[5] She was purchased for ʻAbd al-Raḥmān ibn al-Ḥakam, together with her companion, ʻAlam the Medinese, and others who were attached to her [i.e., her accompanists]. They gave their name to the "House of the Medinese" [*dār al-madaniyyāt*] in the palace, earning great appreciation from the Emir ʻAbd al-Raḥmān for the excellence of their singing, their brilliant elegance, and refined manners. Faḍl, their leader, was considered superior in all of this, which garnered her the favor of the Emir. When he went out on pleasure excursions with these Medinese women, he did not mix them with his other women, in order to give his attention exclusively to them. Faḍl continued to be his principal favorite and bore him a son, ʻUmar ibn ʻAbd al-Raḥmān, known as Abū l-Qāsim."[6]

Another of these "Medinese" favorites was known by the name Qalam ("Reed Pen"):

> She was said to have been of Andalusi origin, a Basque captive, and daughter of one of their leaders.[7] As a young girl she was taken east and ended up in Medina, and there she studied the art of singing until she mastered it. She was then purchased for ʻAbd al-Raḥmān, who took her

> as a concubine and with her completed his set of Medinese favorites. She bore him a son, Abān, known as Abū l-Walīd, who became an author, but had no descendants. Muʻāwiya ibn Hishām al-Shabīnsī[8] wrote in his book: "Qalam the Medinese, mother of Abān, son of the Emir ʻAbd al-Raḥmān, was the most skilled of his *qiyān* in singing, the best in the knowledge of the art of composing melodies, and the most versatile in the distinct varieties of song. She also had a good memory for literature [*adība dhākira*], was a good calligrapher, a reciter of poetry, a memorizer of historical/literary accounts [*akhbār*], and knowledgeable in matters of decorum and etiquette [*ʻālima bi-ḍurūb min al-adab*].[9]

Thus, Qalam was originally from northern Iberia and was the daughter of a chieftain who had resisted the new Muslim rulers, which presumably led to her capture and being sold into slavery at an unknown age. She must have demonstrated some degree of musical skill, perhaps due to a pleasant singing voice, for she was shipped across the Mediterranean to al-Medina where she was trained as a *qayna*, and was then purchased for the emir ʻAbd al-Raḥmān and, for the second time, traveled across the Mediterranean, returning to her homeland. It is worth noting that in the case of Qalam, mention of her origin has been preserved, perhaps because the Andalusi historians found it noteworthy that she was originally Iberian and had returned to Iberia. In almost all other cases, the ethnic or geographic origins of *qiyān* are not preserved – in the historical record they are accorded no identity other than that of being a musician, and their names are all "stage names" given during their training. In the cases of Faḍl and Qalam, another reason that their biographies have been preserved may be because they each bore the emir a son – however, their sons were but two among his 86 offspring, 45 of whom were sons!

All of the male singers in ʻAbd al-Raḥmān's court appear to have been freemen. For most of them, little is known beyond their names and sometimes how much they were paid. Ibn Ḥayyān again quotes the 10th-century historian ʻĪsā ibn Aḥmad al-Rāzī:

> Both before and after becoming Emir, ʻAbd al-Raḥmān gathered round him a number of good male singers, according them his patronage in the form of regular salaries as well as occasional payments. Each man among them received ten dinars each month, and they were given gifts and clothing as well. Among them were the singer Abū Yaʻqūb, the two Ḥasans—Ḥasan al-Ḥillī and Ḥasan al-Qarawī—Manṣūr the Jew, and others.[10]

This mention of Manṣūr the Jew is the first mention of a Jewish court musician under the Umayyad regime. In other places his full name is given as Manṣūr ibn Abī Buhlūl, but we unfortunately know little more about him. Was he from a family of indigenous Iberian Jews who had become so completely Arabized linguistically and culturally that he was able to secure a position as a professional musician in the court? Or was he perhaps the member of a family who had immigrated to al-Andalus after the Muslim conquest from elsewhere in the Middle East? In either case, as we shall see, he was to play a decisive role in the history of Andalusian music.

Ziryāb in the court of ʻAbd al-Raḥmān II

The single most celebrated musician of medieval Muslim Spain was ʻAlī ibn Nāfiʽ, commonly referred to by his "stage name" *Ziryāb.* He arrived in Iberia in 822 and soon thereafter is said to have become the most prominent musician in the entourage of ʻAbd al-Raḥmān II. His fame, however, rests only partially on his musical abilities, for he is also credited with a key role in establishing and controlling the protocol and functioning of the Cordoban court. He is said to have dictated that members of the court change the color of their garments for each of the four seasons, taught them to use deodorants and to bleach their clothes, ordered that drinks be served in fine glassware rather than heavy metal goblets and that food be served on leather serving platters rather than on wooden trenchers. He is credited with having introduced the cooking of asparagus to the Arabs of al-Andalus, as well as other dishes of his own creation, and set the style of the court so completely that the Arab nobles even cut their hair in imitation of his coiffure.

Musically he is reported to have memorized 10,000 songs, been an expert in all aspects of music theory, added a fifth string to the lute, constructed a lute that weighed only one-third that of other lutes, established the basic practice of performing a "suite" [*nawba*] in four movements, adopted the habit of playing with an eagle's quill rather than a wooden plectrum, used lion-cub gut for the lower strings of his instrument, taught dozens of singers, and created a style that was continued by several of his ten children and his many students. If the emir was the authority in matters of state, Ziryab, it appears, was the arbiter in matters of taste![11]

This is a truly remarkable tale, but much of it is historically false and is the result of a process of aggrandizement that elevated Ziryāb from the rank of a highly skilled musician to an almost mythic personification of Umayyad glory over several centuries. In what follows, we will trace the development of Ziryāb's biography through three distinct periods: first, the early sources closest to Ziryāb's own era; second, the aggregate biography compiled by the 11th-century historian Ibn Ḥayyān; and, third, the reworking of that material by the 17th-century North African scholar al-Maqqarī.[12] (Readers uninterested in the rather complex textual history detailed here may wish to skip forward to the concluding remarks at the end of this chapter.)

Ziryāb: the early sources[13]

The earliest mention of Ziryāb in Andalusi sources is in *al-ʻIqd al-farīd* [*The Unique Necklace*], an encyclopedic compilation of literature and culture penned by Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih (860–940), who was nearly a contemporary of Ziryāb, having been born in Cordoba only a few years after his death.[14] Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih apparently spent his entire life in his natal city before dying at the age of eighty-two. He was an intimate of the court as early as the reign of Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd al-Raḥmān (r. 852–86) – who would almost certainly have heard Ziryāb perform in his father's court – and toward the end of his life he served as the official panegyrist of ʿAbd al-Rahmān III (r. 929–61). Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih would therefore have met dozens of persons who had known Ziryāb personally and heard him sing, including a number of Ziryāb's own students. In addition, Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih wrote for a public that was well acquainted with Ziryāb, so any gross misrepresentations would certainly have provoked objections:

> Ibrāhīm al-Mawṣilī had a black slave [*ʿabd aswad*] called Ziryāb, who was a naturally gifted singer. Ibrāhīm taught him, and he occasionally attended the gathering of the ʿAbbasid caliph Hārūn al-Rashīd and sang there. He then moved to Qayrawān [in modern Tunisia], to the Banū Aghlab, where he came before the Emir Ziyādat Allāh ibn Ibrāhīm ibn al-Aghlab. He sang verses by the warrior-poet ʿAntara ibn Shaddād for the Emir, in which he said:
>
> This is indeed my mother, black as a raven [*ghurābiyya*]
> From among the sons of Ham, for this you have reproached me.
> Yet I am adept with flashing sword-edges
> And with dark spearheads when you come to me.
> Were it not that you fled on the day of tumult,
> I would have bested you [*qudtuka*] in battle or you me.
>
> Ziyādat Allāh was angered at this and ordered that Ziryāb be struck on the back of the neck and be driven out of his kingdom. He said: "If I find you in any part of my land after three days have passed, I will cut off your head." So Ziryāb crossed the sea to al-Andalus and settled in the court of ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn al-Ḥakam.[15]

Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih identifies Ziryāb as a black slave [*ʿabd aswad*] not as merely dark-skinned [*asmar*], nor does he cite him as a *mawlā* or *ghulām*, terms that express a range of different forms of dependency translated variously as "client," "freeman," or "servant." As in all subsequent historical sources, Ziryāb is given no lineage or genealogy, but rather is cited only by his given name, ʿAlī son of Nāfiʿ, indicating that he was almost certainly of neither Arab nor Persian parentage. It seems probable that his father was also a slave, for Nāfiʿ (lit. "Useful") was a common name for slaves and clients.[16]

Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih offers no reason for Ziryāb's departure from Baghdad, but does tell us that Ziryāb resided in the city of Qayrawān, where he sang before the Aghlabid ruler Ziyādat Allāh I (r. 817–38). Indeed, it is this stage of Ziryāb's life that garners the most attention in Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih's account.

Ziyādat Allāh was the younger son of Ibrāhīm ibn al-Aghlab, founder of the Aghlabid dynasty, and his mother was a slave girl named Jalājil ("Bells") who had been given to his father when he was studying in Cairo.[17] At the death of his father, power passed at first to Ziyādat Allāh's older half-brother, ʿAbd Allāh, who reigned for five years. ʿAbd Allāh had been raised to rule, been given military training, and was schooled in the workings of the court. Ziyādat Allāh, on the other hand, had led a life of leisure, was a talented poet, an eloquent speaker who could hold forth in classical Arabic with correct grammatical case-endings, without appearing snobbish, and was himself a good poet.[18] At the death of his half-brother in 817, this refined, cultured, and somewhat dissolute young man was forced to take on a role as military and political leader for which he was little prepared.

Once in power, Ziyādat Allāh indulged in a luxurious and wanton life style, marked by frequent drinking parties. Either he at this point began to give full rein to a capricious cruelty that he had not previously evinced, or it was only now that his outbursts of brutality began to be noted and recorded because of his new status. These events, however, have colored his portrayal in most historical accounts. In one incident, for example, several captured rebels were brought to him as prisoners, including a certain ʿAmr ibn Muʿāwiya and his two sons. Ziyādat Allāh is said to have left his drinking companions in the middle of the night to kill ʿAmr with his own hands, and then to have returned to continue drinking with them. The following day he cut off the head of one of the two sons and, with the two severed heads of the father and son arrayed on a shield, he presented them to the second son asking if he recognized them, to which he replied: "Yes, I recognize those without whom life will hold no more happiness for me."[19] The second son was then also decapitated and all three heads on the shield were placed before Ziyādat Allāh and his companions so that they could drink over them. According to Ibn Abbār, the court poet ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn Abī Salma was not only present, but also composed verses, at this infamous drinking party.[20]

The first few years of Ziyādat Allāh's reign were relatively calm politically and militarily, but, beginning in the year 822 he faced a series of rebellions and revolts that were to take up most of the remaining years of his rule until his death in 838. From 827 to 831, he also oversaw the conquest of Sicily under the leadership of Asad ibn al-Furāt, who had previously been a harsh critic of Ziyādat Allāh's extravagant and dissolute lifestyle.

To return to Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih's account of Ziryāb's misadventure in the Aghlabid court, it is crucial to note that Ziyādat Allāh was the son of a slave girl, most probably black, as was the famous pre-Islamic poet ʿAntara. Ziyādat Allāh apparently had a rather close relationship to his mother, for one of his most famous poems, composed after a devastating defeat on the battlefield at Sbība in 825 that resulted in the loss of many of his officers and men, is addressed to her and, quite remarkably, does so by name:

> Sbība has killed off all the valiant warriors
> And all the heroic leaders from among the slaves [*'abīd*].
> When you think of the disaster at Sbība,
> Weep, O Jalājil, with wailing lamentations![21]

'Antara and the other dark-skinned, mixed-race poets of the pre-Islamic and early Islamic period were collectively dubbed "the ravens of the Arabs" in later Arabic literature, a moniker which finds an echo in 'Antara's reference to the raven-color of his mother [*ghurābiyya*]. Ziryāb may have intended the quoted lines from 'Antara to be a compliment, but instead Ziyādat Allāh apparently found it insulting that Ziryāb should call attention to his mother's slave status even obliquely. Perhaps he also thought it impertinent that this black slave singer should attempt to associate himself with the likes of the great black poet 'Antara and Ziyādat Allāh himself, and therefore ordered him beaten on the nape of the neck and driven out of his realm.[22]

It seems logical to assume that this incident happened shortly before Ziryāb's arrival in al-Andalus. Though Ibn 'Abd Rabbih offers no exact date for this event, later sources claim that Ziryāb's arrival coincided with the death of al-Ḥakam I and the ascension to the throne of 'Abd al-Rahmān II in 822. This would place Ziryāb's ill-fated performance before Ziyādat Allāh at the very end of the calm period in his reign or at the very beginning of the revolts that were to last more than a decade. It seems possible that this performance may have taken place against the background of the first rebellions against Ziyādat Allāh's reign and, without stretching the hypothesis too far, that this might even have been the reason for Ziryāb's choice of warlike lyrics by the hero-poet 'Antara. Ziyādat Allāh, son a slave woman and himself a well-known poet, was perhaps meant to be encouraged by the example of the ever-victorious 'Antara, also the son of a slave woman and a great poet. The comparison, however, apparently went awry, and the ruler was instead deeply offended. The subsequent sudden outburst and the order to have Ziryāb beaten and then expelled from the kingdom fits in with the other accounts of Ziyādat Allāh's unpredictable and impulsive sadistic acts, such as the beheadings cited above.

In general, this account therefore seems quite realistic in tone – Ziyādat Allāh was artistically inclined and was also a patron of poets, he was the son of a slave, who was probably black, which explains his rage over the verses that were chosen in this performance. In addition, the punishment meted out does not seem out of character, considering the other acts of cruelty found in the extant historical accounts. One might even observe that in comparison with the fate of 'Amr ibn Mu'āwiya and his two sons, Ziryāb got off rather lightly.

Another short reference to Ziryāb in the final section of Ibn 'Abd Rabbih's *al-'Iqd al-farīd* demonstrates even less reverence for the legendary figure. In a series of witty remarks attributed to one Muḥammad ibn Maṭrūḥ al-A'raj we find the following exchange that took place after the death of Ziryāb:

> A eunuch of Ziryāb's used to sit with Muḥammad ibn Maṭrūḥ al-Aʿraj. He had completed the pilgrimage, was pious, and regularly attended the mosque. In al-Aʿraj's gathering he used to tell anecdotes about Ziryāb and would say, "Abū l-Ḥasan[23] – God have mercy on him! – used to say such and such." So al-Aʿraj once said to him, "Who is this Abū l-Ḥasan?" He replied, "Ziryāb." Al-Aʿraj retorted, "I have heard that he was *akhraq al-nās l-ist khaṣī.*"

The cleverness of the response lies in the double entendre in the final phrase: the word *akhraq* typically means stupid or boorish, someone who does not respect the bounds of good taste, so *akhraq al-nās* in this sense means "the most boorish of people." But the verb *kharaqa* literally means to pierce, to penetrate, to violate – so when al-Aʿraj completes the phrase with *l-ist khaṣī,* "up a eunuch's asshole," his listeners immediately understood that the literal meaning of the verb was intended. A very rough approximation might be rendered in colloquial English: "I've heard he was the screwiest of people … he liked to screw his eunuch up the ass." One can almost hear the brief pause between the first and second halves of the line which led to the burst of laughter – and indeed it is the cleverness of this reply that caused the anecdote to be included in Ibn 'Abd Rabbihi's literary collection. The insult, of course, was aimed primarily at the eunuch who apparently spoke a little too often and a little too enthusiastically about his dear departed master in social gatherings, but also, by extension, at the late Ziryāb himself.

For those versed in the later nearly hagiographic accounts of Ziryāb, these curt, almost insulting, passages by a near contemporary are shocking, and indeed, required explanation. Julián Ribera attributed this disdainful tone to "traditional Arab feeling against singers" on the part of the author.[24] This judgment, however, is not borne out by other evidence. To begin with, Ibn 'Abd Rabbih included an entire volume on musicians and singers in his work, none of whom are treated in a similar manner.[25] In addition, Ibn 'Abd Rabbih is portrayed in other texts as a devoted aficionado of music. In one anecdote, in fact, we find him struggling to hear a singing girl whom Ziryāb had trained:

> Abū 'Umar Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad Ibn 'Abd Rabbih stopped beneath the balcony of one of the notables [of Cordoba], for he had heard beautiful singing. The women inside sprinkled water on him [to make him go away], not knowing who he was. He went to a nearby mosque and asked to borrow a slate from the one of boys there and wrote:
>
> O you who hoard the voice of the warbling bird,
> I would never have believed anyone to be capable of this act of avarice.
> Since even if all the ears of the world were listening,
> [The beauty of] her voice would not thereby be diminished nor increased.

Don't be stingy in letting me hear her by shutting up a voice
That occupies the place of the soul in the body.
If Ziryāb were alive, after hearing her,
He would have died of envy and of shame!
As for wine, I have not drunk it,
I come to you with nothing but this ditty in my hand.[26]

This anecdote, quoted above from al-Ḥumaydī (d. 1095), appears in a number of later texts including works by al-Ḍabbī (d. 1203), Ibn Diḥya (d. 1235), and al-Maqqarī (d. 1632).[27] The attribution of the poem quoted in these anecdotes to Ibn 'Abd Rabbih is strengthened by comparison to another of his poems. The verses are about the qualities of the lute and end in a nearly identical reference to Ziryāb, though the comparison is now to the sound of the lute rather than to a singing girl. Ibn 'Abd Rabbih introduces the poem as follows: "And from our own verses on this theme are …" [*wa-min qawlinā fī hādhā l-ma'nā …*]:

It was as if the lute were, amongst us, a king
Strolling leisurely about accompanied by his soldiers […]
If Ziryāb had been alive and heard it,
He would have died of envy for he could not have beat it.

It seems clear from the above examples that Ibn 'Abd Rabbih harbored nothing that could be termed a "traditional Arab feeling" against musicians. He cites Ziryāb as the most famous singer of recent history, but not, as would be true in later centuries, as a singer far and above all other musicians. Indeed, the claim made in the poem cited above is that the singing girl Maṣābīh, who earlier had studied with Ziryāb, later surpassed her teacher. The anecdote thus both confirms Ziryāb's fame as a musician and at that same time demonstrates that later musicians were deemed comparable, and in some cases even superior, to him. Clearly Ziryāb was the man to beat, but in the writings of Ibn 'Abd Rabbih he was not unbeatable.

In the end, the simplest explanation for the non-laudatory tone of this earliest biographical notice is that Ibn 'Abd Rabbih, being nearly a contemporary of Ziryāb, portrayed him in realistic terms. After all, this account only appears surprising in comparison to the "legendary versions" of Ziryāb that were to emerge beginning in the 11th century. Almost all of the professional male singers of the 7th and 8th centuries were of mixed ethnic origin, and the majority were either slaves or *mawālī* (clients or servants). Positive and negative anecdotes were recorded about almost all of the preeminent singers of the day. Why should the portrayal of Ziryāb be any different?

Rivalries in the court

Henry George Farmer, however, posited a different reason for what he, too, deemed an inexplicably deprecatory account of Ziryāb in Ibn 'Abd Rabbih's text. The preferential treatment that ‘Abd al-Rahmān II accorded to his principal singer is said to have provoked envy among the other members of the court. Farmer therefore hypothesized that Ibn ‘Abd Rabbih’s brusque treatment of Ziryāb “echoed some of this ill-feeling.”[28] This is a more plausible explanation, for various other early sources report that his contemporaries often spoke of him disparagingly, which at times led to serious consequences.

One of these altercations involved a major figure in Andalusi literature and diplomacy, Yaḥyā ibn Ḥakam al-Bakrī, nicknamed “the Gazelle” [*al-ghazāl*] for his remarkable good looks. He is described as one of the “great men of state, famous for his poetry and his wisdom.”[29] After Byzantine emissaries arrived in Cordoba with a letter from the emperor Theophilus, Yaḥyā was charged with carrying ‘Abd al-Raḥmān II’s response to Byzantium. There he enthralled the court with his wit and erudition, and, intriguingly, appears to have carried on a rather flirtatious friendship with the empress Theodora. In addition, he is also said to have been sent on a diplomatic mission to the Vikings, who had recently raided Seville and the Guadalquivir Valley; however, this voyage may be a fiction created by the 12th/13th-century historian Ibn Diḥya.[30] He lived to the ripe old age of 94, a life that spanned the reigns of five Umayyad emirs from ‘Abd al-Raḥmān I to that of his great-great-grandson, Muḥammad, son of ‘Abd al-Raḥmān II. Despite his remarkable standing in the court, when he composed a satirical poem (*hijā’*) targeting Ziryāb, he was exiled from al-Andalus: “He maligned `Alī ibn Nāfi`, known as Ziryāb, in a satirical poem and this was mentioned to ‘Abd Raḥmān, who then ordered that he be exiled.”[31] Clearly Ziryāb lived under the close protection of his patron. The poem has not come down to us, and it may have been particularly vicious, but it is nevertheless truly remarkable that one of the most prominent diplomatic and literary figures of the Cordoban court was exiled and forced to travel to Iraq where he spent a sizable amount of time before being allowed to return, simply for insulting ‘Abd al-Raḥmān’s favorite singer.

Another poem satirizing Ziryāb was composed by Mu’min ibn Sa‘īd, about whom Ibn Ḥayyān noted that “few escaped his lampoons”:

> I complained to her of my passion when they departed,
> The complaint of a grieving one, saddened by separation.
> The heat of separation caused her tears to flow,
> And the fire of love burned between her ribs as she replied:
> “Endure the separation or weep as
> Weeps the silk under the armpits of ‘Alī ibn Nāfi‘!”

The first two verses are stereotypical verses of Arabic love poetry with the lovers complaining of the pain of separation. The final verse, however, takes a sudden comic turn by comparing the lover’s tears to the sweat stains under Ziryāb’s arms.

Yet another incident involved one of ‘Abd al-Raḥmān’s other courtiers, Ibn al-Shimr. Although he was apparently friends with Ziryāb, he was also a jokester who constantly made fun of him. Ziryāb complained to the emir and Ibn Shimr was thrown in prison, not to be released until other members of the court pressed Ziryāb to forgive him. The following incident occurred soon after his release from prison:

> Not long thereafter the Emir ʿAbd al-Raḥmān rode forth with his entourage to al-Ruṣāfa and ascended to the foot of the mountains intending to hunt magpies. He carried on his arm a sparrow hawk of his that was skillful in hunting them, but he was unable to find any. Try as he might, none were to be found. Finally, he said to his companions, "Whoever brings me a bird shall receive whatever he wants in reward." Ibn al-Shimr came rushing towards him and said, "Emir, don't wear yourself out searching for a magpie when there's one right here next to you." He replied, "Where do you see one?" He said, "Ziryāb! If we were to daub his ass and his armpits with a bit of white cheese,[32] he'd turn out [black and white like] a magpie, you can't deny it!" The Emir was overcome with laughter at his words and he said to Ziryāb, "This shows you that buffoonery and shamelessness are part of Ibn al-Shimr's very nature and neither desire nor fear can rid him of them. What do you think?" Ziryāb said to him, "It is as my lord has said, and I call as witnesses God and all those present with us, that I will not hold him to account ever again – let him say what he wills!" Later the two of them were reconciled through friendship and good company.[33]

ʿĪsā ibn Aḥmad al-Rāzī, however, portrayed the relationship between Ziryāb and Ibn al-Shimr in a rather different manner. He describes the atmosphere in court as one of jovial teasing among friends that at times got so out of hand, or perhaps became so vulgar, that it irritated the emir to the point that he had the worst offender, Ibn al-Shimr, beaten and imprisoned.[34]

Ziryāb's reputation as a spoiled favorite of the emir still lingered on in Cordoba nearly a century after his death, when Ibn al-Qūṭiyya (d. 977) composed his *Taʾrīkh fatḥ al-Andalus*[35] [History of the Conquest of al-Andalus]. In this very short account, Ziryāb is linked not to Ibrāhīm and Isḥāq al-Mawṣilī and the court of Hārūn al-Rashīd, but instead to that of his son, the ʿAbbasid caliph Muḥammad al-Amīn in Baghdad, who was reputed to have lived a licentious and dissolute lifestyle and was eventually defeated and killed in a civil war with his half-brother, al-Maʾmūn:

> When al-Amīn was killed, Ziryāb fled to al-Andalus and obtained an excellent position with ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn al-Ḥakam. He was worthy of this due to his good taste, his reliable transmission [of songs], and his superiority in the art of music.[36]
>
> Among the anecdotes told of him is that he one day sang a song so beautifully that ʿAbd al-Rahmān II said: "The treasurers are ordered to pay him 30,000 dinars." When the messenger was sent to them with this

> decree […] the treasurers looked at one another in hesitation and Mūsā ibn Jadir, their leader, said: "Speak up!" His companions replied: "We will go along with whatever you say." But he turned to the messenger and said: "Even though we are the treasurers of the Emir – May God preserve him – we are also the treasurers of the Muslims. We collect taxes on their wealth and we spend it to their benefit, and this payment, by God, cannot be executed. Not one among us wishes to see in his leger [*ṣaḥīfa*] tomorrow: '30,000 dinars from the money of the Muslims paid out to a singer for a song that he sang!'[37] Let the Emir – May God preserve him – pay it out of his own wealth."
>
> [Upon his return to the palace] the messenger who had gone out with the draft [*ṣakk*] said to the palace official [*khalīfa*], "The treasurers have refused." Then the palace official went in and relayed this message to the Emir. Ziryāb griped, "What type of obedience is this?!" But ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn al-Ḥakam replied, "This is true obedience and I shall appoint them ministers because of it. They spoke the truth." After that he ordered that the amount be paid to Ziryāb from his personal funds.[38]

In Ibn al-Qūṭiyya's text, no sojourn in the Aghlabid court of Tunisia is mentioned, nor is there any explanation of Ziryāb's life during the nine-year gap between the killing of al-Amīn in 813 and Ziryāb's arrival in al-Andalus in 822. But the extravagant favor that Ziryāb found with his new patron ʿAbd al-Raḥmān II is clearly portrayed in this anecdote where the ruler's own treasurers and ministers balk at handing over the outrageous sum promised by ʿAbd al-Raḥmān in a moment of untrammeled largesse. Ziryāb is initially praised for his skills as a courtier for he was possessed of good manners, had memorized a large body of poetry and song, and was an accomplished musician. One can also, however, get a glimpse of Ziryāb as a pampered, temperamental favorite, when he is reported to have burst out, "What type of obedience is this!?" upon hearing that the treasurers had refused to pay him the promised sum from the royal treasury. The emphasis in this account, however, is clearly on the righteousness of the ruler, rather than the genius of the performer.[39]

By the 10th century, the time of Ibn al-Qūṭiyya's writing, less than a century since Ziryāb's death, Ziryāb's origins have become even more obscure at this point than they were in Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih's era, and a completely different tale about the reasons for his departure from Baghdad has emerged. Now he is said to have fled Baghdad at the end of the civil war between the two songs of Hārūn al-Rashīd, al-Amīn and al-Ma'mūn. Presumably a variety of anecdotes about Ziryāb would have been circulating at this time, but Ibn al-Qūṭiyya selected this one account that demonstrates ʿAbd al-Raḥmān's excessive generosity, rather than Ziryāb's abilities as musician.

Among the references to Ziryāb in the early sources (9th-10th centuries), only one author portrayed him in a generally positive light. Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥārith al-Khushānī (d. 971?), author of a history of the judges of Cordoba and a contemporary of Ibn al-Qūṭiyya, includes one anecdote that portrays Ziryāb as a wise companion of the prince who interceded the emir on behalf of the people of Cordoba:

> When Yaḥyā ibn Mu'mar died, the people [of Cordoba] were left without a judge. One day Ziryāb happened to be riding to the palace and they asked him to tell the Emir of their situation and of their sorry state for they had no judge. When Ziryāb approached the Emir, he mentioned this, and the Emir said: "Ziryāb, by God nothing has prevented me from appointing a judge except that I can find only one man [worthy of the position]." Ziryāb said: "I said, 'May God keep the Emir safe—who is he?" He said, "Yaḥyā ibn Yaḥyā, except that he has refused the appointment." Ziryāb replied, "If you wish him to be the judge [and he has refused], then ask him to suggest [someone else to be] judge." The Emir said: "You have spoken wise words." So the Emir sent to Yaḥyā asking him to suggest a judge who would please him if he himself was not willing to accept the position. He suggested Ibrāhīm ibn al-'Abbās and the Emir appointed him.[40]

In summary, then, the early Andalusi sources written in the first two centuries after the death of Ziryāb recognize him as a master musician and a companion of the emir, but also portray him as a spoiled favorite, the butt of jokes and satirical poems, the object of jealousy and envy among his fellow courtiers, and a figure who caused one of the most respected men of al-Andalus to be exiled and a fellow courtier to be imprisoned. Remarkably, none of these early accounts focus on his skill as a singer or composer, nor do they list any songs or poems that he composed, or even note that any of his compositions were still in circulation, as was usually the case in biographical notices about singers. Ziryāb, at least in this early era, appears to have been a famous musician, but not primarily famous for his music.

Eastern echoes

Given that Ziryāb is said to have started his career attached to the household of the caliph al-Mahdī and/or to the famous father and son musicians Ibrāhīm al-Mawṣilī and Isḥāq al-Mawṣilī, it is surprising that there is no mention of him in the lengthy biographies that al-Iṣbahānī dedicates to this father and son duo. In fact, there is only one faint echo of Ziryāb in early eastern sources found in two variant accounts, both of which testify to Ziryāb's fame when he was at the pinnacle of his career in Cordoba.[41] The anecdote first appears in Ibn Abī Ṭāhir Ṭayfūr's (d. 893) *Ta'rīkh Baghdād* [*History of Baghdad*] and reports a conversation said to have taken place between the 'Abbasid caliph al-Ma'mūn (r. 813–33) and one of his court singers, 'Allūya (d. 850). 'Allūya was one of the singers who had successfully negotiated the change of regime from the Umayyad to the Abbasid dynasty, though he appears to have retained a personal loyalty to the Umayyads. Complaining of his sorry financial state by comparing himself with Ziryāb, he burst out:

> "Your former client Ziryāb is now with my masters [i.e., the Umayyads of Spain] riding in an entourage of one hundred servants, while I am here with you, dying of hunger!"[42] Al-Ma'mūn was angry with him for twenty days, but then forgave him.[43]

This anecdote is repeated verbatim in the history of al-Ṭabarī (ca. 838–923) who places it in the year 832 (that is, some ten years after Ziryāb's arrival in Cordoba), and it appears two additional times in al-Iṣbahānī's *Kitāb al-Aghānī*, once in a version quite similar to the account above (KA IV: 353–4), but also in a second version that differs in a number of details and is recounted by, and from the viewpoint of, the singer 'Allūya (KA XI: 355–8). In all of its iterations, this anecdote establishes that Ziryāb was well enough known in the East at the time of al-Ma'mūn, approximately ten years after his arrival in al-Andalus, for 'Allūya to refer to him and to the lavish treatment he was receiving in the Cordoban court of 'Abd al-Rahmān II.

One crucial detail, however, is found in a final explanatory line attached to this anecdote first in *Ta'rīkh Baghdād* and repeated again in al-Ṭabarī, for it provides evidence not only that Ziryāb had been a client of the 'Abbasids, specifically of the caliph al-Mahdī, but also that he had traveled first to Syria before then traveling on to the Maghrib.

> Ziryāb was a client [*mawlā*] of the caliph al-Mahdī who traveled to Syria [*al-Shām*], and then on to the Maghrib, to the Umayyads there.

No other historical source mentions Syria as part of Ziryāb's itinerary, but the idea that he spent time there before traveling to North Africa and Iberia is widely cited among musicians in Damascus and Aleppo in modern times.[44] This anecdote thus not only offers evidence that Ziryāb's fame had spread all the way back to Baghdad, but also provides a possible explanation for the mysterious "missing decade" in Ziryāb's biography, namely, that he resided in Syria for a time before heading to North Africa.

One other mention of Ziryāb in the Mashriq is found in the book *Ḥāwī al-funūn wa-salwat al-maḥzūn* [*Compilation of the Arts and a Consolation for the Grieving*], written by the principal musician of the Fatimid court in Egypt, Ibn Ṭaḥḥān (d. after 1057) in the 11th century.[45] In a series of chapters listing the names of great singers and musicians from the pre-Islamic period to the 11th century, Ibn al-Ṭaḥḥān makes no mention of Ziryāb, or indeed of any musician from al-Andalus; however, he does include a brief reference of Ziryāb when describing factors that can encourage or discourage a singer in performance:

> It has been said that Isḥāq son of Ibrāhīm [al-Mawṣilī] had a servant [*ghulām*] by the name of Ziryāb who knew in the art of singing what

> nobody else of his era knew.[46] Isḥāq used to bring him with him to gatherings and he would turn his attention towards him "to encourage himself" [*li-tuḥiss nafsahu*] [i.e., while performing] for he felt that he had with him someone knowledgeable of everything he sang, which increased his excellence [in performance], the honors he received, and all that he did.[47]

Ziryāb is here portrayed as a frequent companion of his teacher, Isḥāq al-Mawṣilī during the latter's performances, though not himself as a singer. The anecdote is cited by Ibn al-Ṭaḥḥān as a demonstration that a singer can only be as good as his audience – an unreceptive and ignorant audience will result in a mediocre performance, but when a singer has a knowledgeable audience and faces listeners of refined tastes, this will encourage him to produce exquisite performances.

The emergence of the legend

The second stage in Ziryāb's historical transformation is found in the writings of Ibn Ḥayyān (987–1076), who combined conflicting earlier accounts in a complex, multivocal biography that incorporated many of the sources examined above as well as the main source for a completely different depiction of him. [48]

Born in Cordoba, Ibn Ḥayyān was raised with close ties to the court since his father served as a secretary during the reign of al-Manṣūr, the 'Āmirid chamberlain who wrested control of the realm from the young, inexperienced Umayyad prince he was supposed to serve. Though Ibn Ḥayyān's father served the 'Āmirid usurpers, he himself, like his more famous contemporary Ibn Ḥazm (994–1064), became a staunch partisan of the Umayyads. He wrote his major works after the fragmentation of Umayyad al-Andalus in 1031 into dozens of petty city-states and idealized the unified Umayyad rule of al-Andalus as a lost "golden age." The Andalus he had known was crumbling, Cordoba had been sacked, and what remained was an intense nostalgia for the glory of Umayyad rule, for which Ziryāb was about to be elevated to the status of icon.

Though most of Ibn Ḥayyān's work has been lost, fragments of his two major books have survived: the *Kitāb al-Matīn* [The Reliable Book], which deals with the history of the 11th century, and *al-Muqtabis* [The Quoter] a history of the early centuries of Muslim rule in Spain composed primarily of quotations from earlier historical works.[49] The first section of Ibn Ḥayyān's account of Ziryāb draws on the works of three earlier authors: 'Īsā ibn Aḥmad al-Rāzī (d. 989), Abū l-Walīd 'Abd Allāh Ibn al-Faraḍī (962–1013), and 'Ubāda Ibn Mā' al-Samā' (d. 1028 or 1030). He also inserts a number of comments of his own, and occasionally cites contemporary ideas about Ziryāb using framing devices such as "Some people have said" [*qālū*] or "Some people have mentioned" [*dhakarū*]. Then, in the middle section of the biography, he shifts sources and quotes extensively from an anonymous text titled *The Book of Information about Ziryāb* [*Kitāb akhbār Ziryāb* – hereafter KAZ], which he sometimes refutes. This work is laudatory to the point of being hyperbolic and constitutes the starting point for the glorified version of Ziryāb that came to dominate in later centuries. Finally, in the third and final section of the biography, Ibn Ḥayyān includes a variety of anecdotes that focus more on the rivalry and bickering among the members of the court, which may have been included as a counterweight to the hagiographic tone of the quotations from KAZ.

In KAZ an entirely new account of Ziryāb's departure from Baghdad appears. In this version he was a student of Isḥāq ibn Ibrāhīm al-Mawṣilī, court musician to the caliph Hārūn al-Rashīd. One day the caliph asks Isḥāq for something new and Isḥāq suggests that he bring his student, Ziryāb, to sing for him. Ziryāb sings so beautifully for the caliph that his teacher is overcome with jealousy and fears that Ziryāb will take his place at the court. He takes Ziryāb aside and offers him money to leave Baghdad and never return, and threatens to have him killed if he does not. Ziryāb, knowing his teacher's power and influence, decides to leave. When the caliph later asks after the talented young singer, Isḥāq replies that unfortunately his student was struck by madness, claimed to receive his compositions from the jinn, and had left Baghdad in a fit of pique because he felt the caliph's gifts to him had not been sufficiently generous.

It may well be that the earlier version of Ziryāb's career at the Aghlabid court in Tunisia is at the origin of this much later version, for they both involve fateful performances that end in being expelled from the court under threat of death. This new version, however, is far more complimentary to Ziryāb, and effectively transforms a moment of intense humiliation into one of artistic triumph. It also connects him to the most renowned of the ʻAbbasid caliphs, and portrays him as such an exceedingly talented musician that his own teacher, consumed with envy, forces him to leave Baghdad. This version, however, again poses a problem in terms of chronology: Hārūn al-Rashīd died in 809, so even if Ziryāb's ill-fated performance took place in the last year of the caliph's life, there is a gap of some 13 years between his departure from Baghdad, and his arrival in al-Andalus in 822. Ibn Ḥayyān elsewhere provides a possible solution to the "missing decade," but one that he reports only as something that "people have said"[*dhakarū*] rather than from a reliable source: "Some have said that in his homeland an incident happened to him that was the result of envy towards him, and this drove him to the westernmost Maghrib. He moved about in the land of Ifrīqiya for quite a while." This account, still circulating in Ibn Ḥayyān's day, echoes the earliest Andalusi account penned by Ibn ʻAbd Rabbih.

Not surprisingly, KAZ's account of Ziryāb's arrival in Cordoba borders on the histrionic. After being expelled from Baghdad he is said to have written to al-Ḥakam I, who bid him come to al-Andalus. When he arrives in the port city of Algeciras (Ar. *al-Jazīra*) after having crossed the Straits of Gibraltar, he is met by the Jewish court musician, Manṣūr ibn Abī Buhlūl, who greets him with the sad news that al-Ḥakam has died and that his son, ʻAbd al-Raḥmān, has ascended the throne. Ziryāb's first impulse is to head back to North Africa, but Manṣūr convinces him that the new emir is equally as generous as his father had been in supporting musicians. Manṣūr carries messages back and forth between Ziryāb and ʻAbd al-Raḥmān, and it is finally agreed that Ziryāb and his family will travel to Cordoba. Grandiose arrangements are made for every stage of his journey. He is finally ushered into Cordoba under the cover of night out of respect for his womenfolk, and the entire family is taken to a large house exquisitely furnished and amply supplied with foodstuffs, drink, and servants. After his first meeting with the emir, Ziryāb and his four sons are given fine clothing and large sums of money, and all of them are awarded fixed monthly salaries. Ziryāb is accorded 200 dinars a month (20 times the salary of the other court singers) and each of his sons receives 20 per month (twice that of other musicians). In addition, he is given 3,000 dinars as an annual supplement for the feast days, monthly gifts of foodstuffs, and 40,000 dinars' worth of land and property. And, if the account in KAZ is to be believed, all of this was given before the emir had even heard him sing for the first time.

There is, however, one jarring discrepancy in the KAZ account: Ziryāb is first presented as an utterly unknown singer, a student of Isḥāq al-Mawṣili, who had performed but one single time before the caliph Hārūn al-Rashīd. How and when could he then have acquired such fame and renown that the emir of al-Andalus would have showered him with riches upon his arrival in Cordoba? Given that some of the most basic elements of the account in KAZ do not fit together, we are more than justified in approaching some of the more fabulous details of this biography with a degree of skepticism, especially in the selectively redacted form found in the later writings of al-Maqqarī.

The author of Kitāb Akhbār Ziryāb

Ibn Ḥayyān does not mention the name of the author of KAZ, and perhaps did not know it, for he is otherwise extremely meticulous in citing the various sources he quoted. Who might the author of this work that conflicts so dramatically with earlier accounts have been? A series of references in other works from the 11th century point to a possible answer.

Ibn Ḥazm included an anecdote in the chapter on "Death" in his famous treatise on love, *Ṭawq al-ḥamāma* [*The Neck-ring of the Dove*] that features a handsome young man named Aslam:

> Our friend Abū al-Sirrī ʻAmmār Ziyād reported to me from a trusted source that the secretary (*kātib*) Ibn Quzmān was greatly tormented by his love for Aslam ibn ʻAbd al-ʻAzīz, brother of the chamberlain (*ḥājib*) Hāshim ibn ʻAbd al-ʻAzīz. Aslam was the pinnacle of beauty, which is what caused Ibn Quzmān to fall in love with him and drove him to his

> death. Aslam knew him well and visited him often, but was unaware that he himself was the cause of Ibn Quzmān's malady. Ibn Quzmān died of grief after a long illness. The transmitter of this information said: "I informed Aslam after Ibn Quzmān's death of the reason for his decline and demise, and he was seized with regret. He asked, 'Why didn't you tell me?' I replied, 'Why should I have?' 'By God, I would have drawn closer to him and scarcely left his company – it would have done me no harm.'" This Aslam was a man of distinguished taste in many fields, well versed in law, and discerning in poetry. He composed good poetry and had knowledge of songs and their execution. He was the author of a work on the genres/styles (*ṭarā'iq*) of Ziryāb's singing and information about his life – it is a very remarkable anthology (*dīwān 'ajīb jiddan*). He was the best of people physically and morally, and he was the father of Abū l-Ja'd who used to live in the western part of Cordoba.[50]

According to this text, Aslam was the brother of the Chamberlain Hāshim, who married Ziryāb's daughter, Ḥamdūna, and he would therefore have lived in the mid- to late 9th century.[51] Ziryāb would have been the father of his sister-in-law, a rather tenuous connectioni. But other sources place Aslam a century or more later, and in these accounts his grieving lover is not the secretary Ibn Quzmān (not to be confused with the famous composer of *zajal*s who lived two centuries later), but instead the grammarian Aḥmad ibn Kulayb. Al-Ḥumaydī (d. 1095), a near contemporary of Ibn Ḥazm, for example, cites Aslam in his *Jadhwat al-muqtabis* as the great-great-great-grandson of Hāshim and Ḥamdūna, daughter of Ziryāb, that is, a direct descendant, but six generations removed from Ziryāb himself:

> Aslam ibn Aḥmad ibn Sa'īd ibn al-Qāḍī Aslam ibn 'Abd al-'Azīz ibn Hāshim Abū l-Ḥasan – he wrote prose and composed poetry and came from a family of knowledge and distinction; he has a well-known book on the songs of Ziryāb. Ziryāb had, among the kings of al-Andalus, the status of al-Mawṣilī and other famous singers. He was prominent in his craft, excelled in it, and earned his living by it. There are genres/styles [*ṭarā'iq*] attributed to him. This Aslam is the one whom we mentioned regarding the [tragic love] story of Aḥmad ibn Kulayb.[52]

The conflicting genealogies given for Aslam differ in two main points, both of which might be attributable to scribal error. The genealogy in *Ṭawq al-ḥamāma* appears first to have skipped several generations by jumping from one occurrence of the name Aslam to the other (*homoioteleuton*), and second, to have inserted "brother of" rather than "son of" between the names Hāshim and 'Abd al-'Azīz. If Aslam had been only one generation removed from Ziryāb, as he is presented in Ibn Ḥazm's text, he would have been writing for a public that was familiar with the historical Ziryāb. But the surviving passages from KAZ are so much at variance with the personality of Ziryāb as presented in other early sources, such as those by Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih, Ibn al-Faraḍī, al-Rāzī, and Ibn al-Qūṭiyya, that a later date seems more probable. In addition, several passages of KAZ refer to the lifetime of Ziryāb as having been in a bygone era. Al-Ḥumaydī's text, on the other hand, presents Aslam as a direct descendant (rather than related by marriage), places him six generations removed from Ziryāb, and associates him with the grammarian Aḥmad ibn Kulayb, who (if the dates in al-Ṣafadī are to be trusted) died in 1034–5.[53] According to the genealogy transmitted by al-Ḥumaydī, Aslam would have been born in the late 10th or early 11th century, and might have composed KAZ sometime in the mid- to late 11th century. The mysterious identity of the author of the anonymous KAZ is therefore not entirely resolved, but this is the text (via al-Maqqarī, see below) that forms the basis of all modern portrayals of Ziryāb.

Only a handful of references to Ziryāb are found in sources written during the centuries between Ibn Ḥayyān's lengthy biography of Ziryāb in the 11th century and al-Maqqarī's 17th-century retelling. Ibn Saʿīd al-Maghribī (1213–86), born near Granada and raised in Seville, in his *al-Mughrib fī ḥulā l-Maghrib*, for example, recounts an anecdote in which Ziryāb is given an enormous sum and spends it in a single day.[54] Al-Ḍabbī recounts the story (examined above) of Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih listening to a female slave singer trained by Ziryāb, but adds a curious explanation about Ziryāb for his Mashriqi readership: "Ziryāb held a place in music like that of al-Mawṣilī. He had a style [*ṭarīq*] and songs that have been learned by others, which have been collected in books. Due to his skill and craft, he came to hold an *excessively high position* among the kings there [in al-Andalus] and became so famous that they have coined proverbs about it."[55]

Finally, Ibn Khaldūn (d. 1406) makes a very brief mention of Ziryāb in his famous *Muqaddima,* which in effect does nothing but muddy the waters further by stating that he joined the court of al-Ḥakam I, rather than that of ʿAbd al-Raḥmān, contrary to all other sources.[56]

The final transformation: al-Maqqarī

Shihāb al-Dīn al-Maqqarī was born in the city of Tlemcen (modern Algeria) in 1577, studied in Morocco, and in 1617–18 traveled east to Cairo, and it is there that he wrote the work for which he is most widely known, *Nafḥ al-ṭīb min ghuṣn al-Andalus al-raṭīb wa-dhikr wazīrihā Lisān al-Dīn ibn al-Khaṭīb* (*The Scented Breeze from the Tender Branch of al-Andalus and mention of its Vizier Lisān al-Dīn ibn al-Khaṭīb*). It consists of two sections: the main work is an extensive biography of Lisān al-Dīn ibn al-Khaṭīb (1313–75), a remarkable figure in Andalusi politics and letters, which is preceded by a lengthy introduction that covers the history, culture, and geography of al-Andalus. Although written in the 17th century, al-Maqqarī quotes extensively from earlier works, many of which have not survived, so his work remains an invaluable source for the history of al-Andalus.

Al-Maqqarī used Ibn Ḥayyān as his primary source for the biography of Ziryāb, but he reworked the passages he quotes from *al-Muqtabis*, eliminating the multiple voices presented by Ibn Ḥayyān and forging them into a smooth, anonymous, third-person narration. This at times leads to a presentation that almost directly contradicts the original text. Whereas Ibn Ḥayyān offers conflicting accounts and allows his readers to choose which to believe, al-Maqqarī eliminates this multivocality, selects one version, and offers it as fact without further comment. Beyond choosing among various accounts, al-Maqqarī also cut specific passages with surgical precision to create a more positive image of Ziryāb. One of the most famous anecdotes about Ziryāb's influence in the Cordoba, for example, recounts that upon his arrival in court, his coiffure was deemed so stylish that the Arab nobles of the court cut their own hair in imitation of him. Here is al-Maqqarī's version:

> When Ziryāb arrived in al-Andalus, all who lived there, men and women, used to dress the hair of their head by combing it parted in the middle of the forehead, hanging loose over their temples and eyebrows. But when the people of refinement (*dhawū al-taḥṣīl*) among them saw the coiffure worn by Ziryāb, his sons, and his womenfolk, cut over the forehead straight across the eyebrows, tucked back behind the ears, but flowing at the temples, as is worn today by eunuch servants and singing girls, their hearts embraced it (*hawathu af'idatuhum*) and they approved of it (*istaḥsanūhu*).[57]

The same passage occurs nearly verbatim in a passage from KAZ quoted by Ibn Ḥayyān, but with one dramatic difference:

> . . . tucked behind his ears, flowing at the temples, as is worn today by eunuch servants and the finest singing girls, *they adopted it for their slaves* ('abīdihim)*, and they found it fitting for their male* (fityān) *and female* (imā') *servants, and switched them [to this style] and had them wear it.* Their coiffure [i.e., that of slaves, servants, singing girls and eunuchs] has continued to be in this style even today.[58]

Thus, by cutting out a few words, al-Maqqarī makes it seem that the Arab nobles adopted this coiffure for themselves, rather than *for their slaves, eunuchs, and servants.* This is, of course, a much more believable account, for a singer in this era, no matter how well loved by his patron, was a class of servant, and not to be confused with men of power or lineage. Indeed, both texts, KAZ and al-Maqqarī, remark that this coiffure continued to be that of the servant class. But it is al-Maqqarī's version of this anecdote that is repeatedly cited in modern scholarship, hence the myth that Arab nobles of the court chose to cut their hair in imitation of Ziryāb.[59]

In the anecdote examined about where Ibn ʻAbd Rabbih heard one of Ziryāb's former students, Maṣābīḥ, singing inside a house and composed a poem addressed to her owner, imploring him for permission to come inside and hear her sing, the penultimate line of the original poem was:

> *If Ziryāb were alive, after hearing her,*
> *He would have died of envy and shame!*

When al-Maqqarī reproduced this anecdote, however, he cut off the poem to avoid including this verse, which belied the image of Ziryāb that he was creating.[60]

Over and over again al-Maqqarī trims and cuts Ibn Ḥayyān's account. In one passage he portrays Ziryāb as a natural poet [*shāʻir maṭbūʻ*], whereas Ibn Ḥayyān refuted this idea, and he then eliminates a passage where Ibn Ḥayyān praised Aḥmad, Ziryāb's son, as a superb and natural poet. As a result, Ibn Ḥayyān portrays Aḥmad as a better poet than his father, but al-Maqqarī presents Ziryāb as the better of the two. Despite these references to Ziryāb as a poet, the only poetry by Ziryāb found in historical sources are four rather mediocre verses attributed to him in an anthology put together by the father of Ibn Saʻīd, which, however, has not survived, quoted by al-Maqqarī.[61] Another excised passage from Ibn Ḥayyān was apparently objectionable to al-Maqqarī because it shows one of Ziryāb's sons, ʻUbayd Allāh, improving upon a composition of his father's.[62]

Al-Maqqarī's reworking of Ibn Ḥayyān's text represents the final stage of the glorification of Ziryāb. From the figure of a master musician who was nevertheless the butt of jokes and satirized in verse, to the figure of a spoiled favorite of the emir, to a figure about whom conflicting reports circulated, Ziryāb finally emerges as *the* central figure of the court, dictating protocol, modes of dress, the serving of food, controlling the kitchens, and, of course, establishing a new innovative musical style.

It is in some sense a historical accident that al-Maqqarī's version of Ziryāb has become so well known in modern times. The introductory section of al-Maqqarī's *Nafḥ al-ṭīb* was translated into English in abridged form by Pasqual de Gayangos in 1840 as *The History of the Muhammadan Dynasties in Spain.* The Arabic text was edited and published first in Leiden (1855–61) by Reinhart Dozy, then at Bulaq (1862), in Cairo (1884–6), and more recently in Beirut (1968) in a new edition by Iḥsān ʻAbbās. The section of Ibn Ḥayyān's *Muqtabis* that contains the biography of Ziryāb, on the other hand, did not become available until much more recently. It was first published in manuscript facsimile by Joaquin Vallvé-Bermejo in 1999, then in a Spanish translation by Federico Corriente and Maḥmūd ʻAlī Makkī (2001), followed by an Arabic edition by Makkī in 2003. If Ibn Ḥayyān's text had been published before al-Maqqarī's, we might now have an entirely different sense of Ziryāb. After all, most of the deliciously glorious anecdotes about Ziryāb come from one single source, the *Kitāb Akhbār Ziryāb*: remove this text from the historical record (and its later adaptation by al-Maqqarī), and we would know Ziryāb primarily for the altercations he got into with other courtiers of the Cordoban court, rather than as a cultural icon of Umayyad glory.

Ziryāb's musical legacy

Unlike the biographies of other musicians from this time period, none of the surviving texts about Ziryāb offer information about his repertory or his compositions. We have no information about which modes or rhythms he used, or which poet's verses he preferred.[63] Although we are told that he had memorized 10,000 song texts and their melodies, these were not of his own composition. One anecdote tells us that the jinn taught Ziryāb songs at night and he would wake up two of his singing girls, teach them these songs, and then go back to sleep and have them perform the songs for him in the morning. However, as Ibn Ḥayyān himself notes, this echoes anecdotes about the great singer Ibrāhīm al-Mawṣilī, widely known because they appear in the *Kitāb al-Aghanī* of Abū l-Faraj al-Iṣbahānī.[64] On the other hand, there are many references to Ziryāb's *ṭarā'iq* [pl. of *ṭarīqa*], a term that signifies a range of ideas including style, genre, or technique.

Ziryāb was unwilling to teach his style or repertory to the singers who were already in the court of Cordoba when he arrived, with the exception of Manṣūr the Jew, who became famous as the greatest male transmitter of the master's style:

> As a result, not one of [the other court singers] transmitted even a single correct song [*ṣawt muthaqqaf*][65] from the repertory of Ziryāb, except for Manṣūr the Jew, who had a special talent that drew them close, so Ziryāb worked hard to teach him. Manṣūr was understanding, intelligent, and adept at learning from Ziryāb, so he transmitted a great deal from his repertory in all genres/styles [*fī kull ṭarīqa*].[66]

Thus, Manṣūr, who was the first to greet Ziryāb upon his arrival on Andalusian soil, was also the most highly regarded male singer, other than Ziryāb's own sons, in transmitting his style and repertory after Ziryāb's death.

In contrast, Ziryāb is said to have taught a very large number of students – we know the names of over 30 female slave singers who studied with him – and several of his children were excellent singers, particularly his daughter Ḥamdūna, and his sons Aḥmad and 'Ubayd Allāh. When Ibn Ḥayyān comments on the impact Ziryāb had on music in al-Andalus, it is his style, rather than his songs [*aṣwāt*] or compositions [*ṣana'āt*] that he mentions:

> A listing of all the male and female singers who transmitted the style [*ṭarīqa*] of Ziryāb from his time to the time of this book's composition would be burdensome, and a complete investigation would be almost impossible.[67]

Among his other musical contributions, Ziryāb is credited with having added a fifth string to the lute, but he does so in a very odd manner. The passage in which this claim appears is somewhat garbled, but it is clear that Ziryāb's lute strings were colored to represent the four humors: yellow for gall, red for blood, black for black bile, and white for phlegm. Ziryāb was dissatisfied, however, for there was no representation of the soul, so he added a fifth, blood-red string in the middle of the instrument, between the second and third strings. From a musical standpoint it appears therefore that this did not increase the range of the instrument, which he might have accomplished by adding a higher or a lower string, but served only a symbolic or philosophical purpose. In any case, there is no indication that any of his students followed him in this, so the fifth string was apparently not essential to his musical style.[68]

Ziryāb is also said to have established standard performance practice. This passage begins by stating that people continued to follow Ziryāb's sartorial dictates up to the present:

> just as every singer begins his performance as Ziryāb did, with the *nashīd* at the beginning, in whatever rhythm [*naqr*][69] it may be, followed immediately by the *basīṭ*, and ending with some *muḥarrakāt* and *ahzāj*, as Ziryāb prescribed to them. No singers [fail to] maintain this practice until now.[70]

Drawing from the use of these terms in other texts, it is clear that the *nashīd* was an unmeasured section and the *basīṭ* a section of measured, slow songs, which was followed by songs that were faster and livelier, the *muḥarrakāt*, and light *ahzāj* songs. Several of the female vocalists mentioned were specialists only in the animated *hazaj* style, so not all singers were equally adept at all four song types.

This performance pattern moving from unmeasured to measured, from slow to fast, finds parallels in modern performances of Andalusi music, but there is no indication that Ziryāb organized the sequence of pieces in his performances by either rhythm or mode, both of which are critical elements in modern practice. In addition, of course, there is the fact that Ziryāb died long before the first *muwashshaḥ* songs were composed, and centuries before that more popular song-form found acceptance as part of the courtly repertoire.

An aggregate summary

Although many elements in the historical record shifted and changed over time, Ziryāb was clearly a master musician. All of the extant texts agree that he was black and none give any genealogy beyond the mention of his father when his name, ʿAlī son of Nāfiʿ, is mentioned. There is no indication in any text that he was Persian of origin, despite the fact that he is widely referred to as "Persian" in modern writings. That he was trained as a singer in Baghdad seems incontrovertible, though whether he studied with Ibrāhīm al-Mawṣilī, with his son Isḥāq al-Mawṣilī or both, is unclear.

The reasons for his departure from Baghdad, however, are impossible to ascertain, given the various conflicting narratives: the earliest texts give no reason at all, and instead recount Ziryāb's expulsion from the Aghlabid court of Ziyādat Allāh I. This, as we have seen, is a plausible account since it fits with other information about the court and personality of that ruler. One later text states that he left Baghdad after the death of the caliph al-Amin during the civil war that was won by his half-brother, al-Ma'mūn, and finally, KAZ presents the now famous account of Ziryāb's single performance before the caliph Hārūn al-Rashīd that was so extraordinary that his teacher, Isḥāq al-Mawṣilī, threatened to kill him if he did not leave Baghdad. This latter version, however, seems suspiciously like a later retelling, in far more complimentary terms, of his expulsion from Tunisia, and is the least believable.

Ziryāb may have spent some time in Syria, as per Ibn Abī Ṭāhir Ṭayfūr's account, and he probably also performed in North Africa in the Aghlabid court, as reported by Ibn 'Abd Rabbih. His arrival in al-Andalus seems reliably dated to 822, the year that al-Ḥakam I passed away and his son, 'Abd al-Raḥmān II, ascended the throne. Ziryāb without doubt became famous, for his renown is reflected even in texts from the Mashriq that had no reason to glorify him, and he seems to have been very richly rewarded, even extravagantly so. His personality was probably a combination of the various characteristics found in the early texts: at times a wise confidant of the emir, entertaining and learned, and at times a tempestuous favorite who demanded revenge for perceived slights, but he was clearly an extraordinary musician.

Many of the details regarding Ziryāb's contributions in cooking, clothing, personal hygiene, etiquette, and court protocol are found only in the nearly hagiographic text of KAZ, probably written by a descendant of Ziryāb's through his daughter, Ḥamdūna, some 150 years after Ziryāb's death. Their historical accuracy must therefore be considered doubtful.

As for his musical contribution, we have surprisingly little information. Unlike the biographies of other musicians of this era, none of the various accounts about Ziryāb highlights his compositions. The creation of a lighter lute seems plausible, and he may well have used an eagle quill for a plectrum. Some details, such as his use of lion-cub gut for the lower strings on his lute, however, seem more like romantic fictions. The establishment of a standard performance practice also seems realistic, though this may equally well have been a practice he brought with him from the East. Multiple texts agree that he trained many students, female slaves, and his own offspring in music, and that his style continued to be performed for several generations.

Whatever else may be said, Ziryāb, who probably died in 857–8, could not have been the origin for the traditions that are now known as Andalusi music across the Arab world, for he sang the repertory and genres of the court music of the 8th and 9th centuries and died long before the emergence of the *muwashshaḥ/zajal* in the late 10th/11th century that forms the core of the repertory today known as Andalusi music in the Arab World.

Notes

1 [*awwal man fakhkhama al-mulk fī l-Andalus min khulafā’ banī Marwān*], Arabic edition, Ibn Ḥayyān 2003 (hereafter *Muqtabis*): 280; Spanish translation 2001 (hereafter *Crónica*): 171. Ibn Ḥayyān’s use of the title “caliph” here is an anachronism: ʻAbd al-Raḥmān II ruled under the title of “emir,” and the title of caliph was not adopted until 929, during the reign of ʻAbd al-Rahmān III.

2 *Muqtabis*, 303; *Crónica,* 187.

3 *Sitāra* literally means “curtain,” but also referred to a group of female singers and instrumentalists who performed behind a curtain, i.e., a female orchestra, not “veiled ones” (*los velados*), *Crónica,* 194.

4 *Muqtabis*, 307; *Crónica,* 193–4.

5 It is likely that Faḍl was one of a class of slave women of mixed heritage known as *muwalladāt.* As M. Gordon has pointed out, many of these women were raised in Arabic-speaking households, spoke Arabic as their mother tongue, and were to all intents and purposes “culturally Arab.” See Gordon 2017: 33–7.

6 *Muqtabis,* 306; *Crónica*, 192–3: Note, *ṣāḥibat ʻAlam al-madaniyya* refers to ʻAlam the singer, not to “experta en la ciencia de Medina” (*Crónica* 192).

7 The Arabic term *bashkans* was also used to refer to the inhabitants of the northernmost regions of Iberia in general, so she may not have been ethnically Basque in the modern sense of the term.

8 Abū l-Muṭṭalib al-Shabānisī (1009/10–1057/8), also known as al-Shabīnsī, see BA VII: 222–3 [1673].

9 *Muqtabis*, 306–7; *Crónica*, 193; *adab* is a term that covers a broad range of ideas from simply “knowledge” to various forms of “correct behavior.”

10 *Muqtabis,* 307–8; *Crónica,* 193–4.

11 Davila 2013: 53–60 refers to this as “the standard historical narrative”; see also Davila 2009.

12 The 1855–61 edition of al-Maqqarī’s work, by Reinhart Dozy, reprinted in 1967, has largely been supplanted by the edition of Iḥsān ʻAbbās 1968. All references here are to the ʻAbbās edition unless otherwise noted.

13 For a more detailed account of Ziryāb’s early life, see Reynolds 2017.

14 There are two death dates given for Ziryab, 845 and 857–8; the latter, only three years before the birth of Ibn ʻAbd Rabbih, is the most widely accepted.

15 Ibn ʻAbd Rabbih 1940–53: VI, 34.

16 In a peculiar coincidence, the founder of the Aghlabid capital Qayrawān was ‘Uqba ibn Nāfi‘, and one can only wonder if perhaps Ziryāb “acquired” this name during his stay in that city.

17 Ibn al-Abbār 1963: I, 93.

18 [*kān yu‘rib al-kalām wa-lā yalḥan dūna tashāduq wa-lā taqa‘‘ur wa-yaṣūgh al-shi‘r al-jayyid*], Ibn al-Abbār 1963: I, 163.

19 Vonderheyden 1927: 211; Ibn ‘Idhārī 1948–51: I, 126.

20 Ibn Abbār 1963: II, 382.

21 Ibid., I, 166.

22 The nape of the neck is a culturally sensitive part of the body in Arab culture, associated with both punishment and submission to authority.

23 Ziryāb had eight sons and two daughters; curiously his *kunya* “Father of al-Ḥasan” seems to be based on the name of his youngest son, rather than on his eldest, which was the more common practice.

24 Julián Ribera y Tarragó 1929: 105.
25 See Farmer 1942 [rpt. 1997: I, 1–33].
26 Emphasis added; cf. Spanish translation Rubiera Mata 2004: 52; Arabic text in Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih 1979: 110.
27 al-Ḥumaydī 1966: 1, 165–6; al-Ḍabbī 1967: 138; Ibn Diḥya 1954: 152–3; al-Maqqarī 1968: III, 131.
28 "Ziryāb" *EI1*.
29 al-Maqqarī 1968: I, 223 (*min kibār al-dawla wa-kān mashhūran fī l-shiʿr wa-l-ḥikma*).
30 See "al-Ghazāl," *EI2*, and Allen 1960.
31 al-Maqqarī 1968: II, 260 (*aqdhafa fī hijāʾ ʿAlī ibn Nāfiʿ al-maʿrūf bi-Ziryāb fa-dhukira dhālika li-ʿAbd al-Raḥmān fa-amara bi-nafīhi*).
32 The word that appears in the manuscript is *sharār* (sparks), which makes no sense in this context (see Ibn Ḥayyān 1999, facs. edition, 154 rº). Makki and Corriente have proposed that this is a scribal error for *sharārīz*, one of the plural forms of *shīrāz*, a type of white cheese or dried curd, attested in other Andalusian sources. See *Crónica,* 211, n. 445, and *Muqtabis*, 333, n. 1.
33 *Muqtabis,* 333; *Crónica,* 214.
34 *Muqtabis*, 334–5; *Crónica,* 215.
35 Variant title: *Tarīkh iftitāḥ al-Andalus*
36 [*wa-kān ahlan li-dhālika fī adabihi wa-riwāyatihi wa-taqaddumihi fī al-ṣināʿa allātī fī yadihi*].
37 Cf. Ibn al-Qūṭiyya 2009: 102 – "None of us wants to see written in his record on the Day of Judgment" (trans. David James).
38 Ibn al-Qūṭiyya 1989: 83–4.
39 Scholars have noted several tendencies in Ibn al-Qūtiyya's historical writing, the most significant of which is that he often wrote in a moralizing, almost didactic, tone and displayed a marked desire to demonstrate to Umayyad rulers that they should rule justly, see Fierro 1989.
40 Al-Khushānī 1965: Arabic 12, Spanish 13–14; al-Khushānī 2007: 85–6.
41 A more detailed analysis of this anecdote is found in Reynolds 2017: 146–50.
42 The term *mawlā* in Arabic can refer to either the master or the client/servant bound together by a relationship of *walāʾ* (loyalty, fealty, clientage).
43 Ibn Abī Ṭāhir Ṭayfūr 2009: 293–4.
44 My thanks to Jonathan Shannon for his confirmation of this information (personal communication).
45 Ibn Ṭaḥḥān 1990.
46 In the ms. the name appears as "Rizyāb," the dot that should be on the first letter being placed slightly to the left.
47 Ibn Ṭaḥḥān 1990: 95.
48 A complete, annotated translation of Ibn Ḥayyān's biography of Ziryāb appears in Dwight F. Reynolds, *Medieval Arab Music and Musicians* (E. J. Brill, *forthcoming*).
49 *Al-Matīn* is extensively quoted in Ibn Bassām al-Shantarīnī's *al-Dhakhīra*.
50 Ibn Ḥazm 1986: 258–9.
51 We do not know the year of Ḥamdūna's birth, but when Ziryāb arrived in 822, four of his eventual eight sons were old enough to be granted salaries by the emir. If, for the sake of argument, we posit that Ḥamdūna was born circa 820, and married at age 20, around 840, her brother-in-law Aslam could probably have been born even before Ziryāb's death in 857 and certainly in the 9th century.

52 al-Ḥumaydī 1966: 172. The story of Aḥmad's love for Aslam is recounted in great detail in the entry on Aḥmad ibn Kulayb earlier in the volume. Note that al-Ḥumaydī, who wrote his work while living in Baghdad, finds it necessary to explain to his readership that Ziryāb was a musician, comparable to Ibrāhīm and Isḥāq al-Mawṣilī. This passage is repeated almost verbatim in al-Ḍabbī 1967: 239.
53 al-Ṣafadī 2000: VII, 197.
54 Ibn Sa'īd 1964: I, 51.
55 al-Ḍabbī 1967: 194 (emphasis added): *fa-'alā 'ind al-mulūk hunāka bi-ṣinā`atihi wa-iḥsānihi 'ulūwan mufriṭan.* See also pages 206, 239, and 378.
56 Ibn Khaldūn 1989 (Arabic): II, 517–18; (English translation) 1958: II: 405.
57 al-Maqqarī 1968: 127
58 *Muqtabis*, 319–20; *Crónica*, 203.
59 For a more detailed discussion of the discrepancies between Ibn Ḥayyān's text and that of al-Maqqarī, see Reynolds 2008.
60 'Abbās, III: 131.
61 Abū l-Ḥasan 'Alī Ibn Sa'īd al-Andalusī (1213–86), the author of *al-Mughrib*, whose father, Abū 'Imrān Mūsā (1177–1243), was the compiler of an immense biographical dictionary, *al-Mu'jam.* See BA V: 166–8 [1068].
62 *Muqtabis*, 326; *Crónica,* 208.
63 One anecdote, however, does portray him as singing verses by Dhū al-Rumma, but the focus of the anecdote is on the two verses extemporized by Ibn Firnās after hearing Ziryāb sing, not on Ziryāb's playing: al-Maqqarī 1968: III, 133
64 In one anecdote, Ibrāhīm learns songs from the devil himself (KA V: 231–5), and in another he learns a song from jinn in the form of two singing cats (KA V: 193–4).
65 A *ṣawt* is a song, not a "chord" [*acorde*], *Crónica,* 211.
66 *Muqtabis* 330, *Crónica,* 211.
67 *Muqtabis*, 330; *Crónica,* 211.
68 For a more detailed discussion of Ziryāb's lute, see Neubauer 1993: 291–2, 306, 312, 316–7, 320, 332. In other medieval portrayals of five-string lutes, the additional string is always the highest string, which had the advantage of extending the range of the instrument to two full octaves.
69 The Arabic term *naqr* indicates rhythm (not *tañido*, *Crónica*, 207)
70 As Makkī has noted (*Muqtabis*, 324, n. 5), this final phrase is the opposite of what the context would seem to require. Makkī suggests that before the verb *lam yata'ahhadhā* a word such as *yukhilla* [fail to] may have been lost, thus "and none of them [fail to] maintain this until today."

5 The final years of the Caliphate, 858–1031

The emir Muḥammad I (r. 852–86), son and successor of ʿAbd al-Raḥmān II, holds a unique position in the Umayyad dynasty as an enthusiast of an Andalusi musical instrument known in Arabic as *al-būq,* and in Castilian as *albogue* and *albogón* (the "big *albogue*"). A heavily damaged fragment of Ibn Ḥayyān's *Muqtabis*, partially edited by M. A. Makkī, recounts that the emir Muḥammad I not only filled his court with players of that instrument, but apparently was himself a talented musician and was particularly fond of an ebony *būq* inlaid with gold and encrusted with the finest jewels.[1]

> [258v] *ʿUbayda reported from his father, ʿAbd Allāh, that al-Nuʿmān ibn al-Mundhir reported from the vizier ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd ibn Basīl, who reported from his father the following*: The Emir Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd al-Raḥmān loved *al-zamar* over all other musical instruments, and did not consider any other instrument to be its equal. Music played on other instruments did not move him. He selected the most gifted and knowledgeable players, brought them to his court, and surrounded himself with them. He rewarded them generously until he had brought together a number the likes of whose skill and craft had never been seen, and lavished on them [bountiful] salaries [*wa-ikhtirāʿan*?] *fī ṭuruqihā.* The most famous of them was Sh-r-ḥ-bīl [?] … [five missing lines][2]
>
> [259r] … a *būq* that was more splendid than all the others made of ebony, inlaid with gold, and encrusted with the finest jewels, and indicated that it was the private *būq* of the emir, but only God knows for sure!

The term *zamar* at times refers to woodwinds in general, but given the mention of the emir's extraordinary *būq* on the following page, interpreting the entire passage as dealing with *būq*-players seems justified. The bottom of page 258v is torn and five lines are missing, but the lost lines appear to say that the narrator of the anecdote, the father of the vizier ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd ibn Basīl, was shown this luxurious instrument by someone who indicated that it belonged to the emir Muḥammad, which he reports with a shade of skepticism, hence the final phrase, "but only God knows for sure" [*wa-llāhu aʿlam*].[3]

Elsewhere in the Arabic-speaking world the term *būq* referred to a type of straight horn or trumpet, but in al-Andalus an unusual variant emerged, not known in other regions. Here is a description by the 13th-century Tunisian writer al-Tīfāshī of the instrument he gave the sobriquet of "the noblest instrument" [*ashraf āla*] of al-Andalus:

> The noblest instrument among the Andalusians, and that which gives the most perfect pleasure in dancing and singing, is *al-būq.* It is one of the things that is distinctive to the people of al-Andalus. It is shaped like a *zamar* [oboe], large as a trumpet.[4] An animal horn is inserted into its end, then a reed-cane is inserted into the horn, and a small tube is inserted into the reed-cane, and it continues thus in sections until it ends in a wheat straw [*qaṣba min al-ḥinṭa*] at the very end. That [i.e., the wheat-straw reed] is where it is played and the real art of the instrument lies therein. When played, it produces beautiful sounds of the most wondrous and ecstasy-provoking type. Among the Andalusians it is the most festive of instruments for singing and dancing in their drinking parties.[5]

A similar description of the *būq* is found in the 14th-century *Muqaddima* [*Prolegomena*] by Ibn Khaldūn in a list of musical instruments played in his time in the Maghrib*:*

> Among the best wind instruments of this era is the *būq.* It consists of a hollow *būq* (trumpet) of copper/brass about an arm's length, widening towards the end to about the size of the palm of one's hand, shaped like a trimmed reed-pen. One blows into it through a small reed that conveys the air from the mouth into the instrument. The sound comes out "thick" [*thakhīn*] and "ringing" [*dawīy*].[6] It has a number of bored holes [*abkhāsh*] and is played by placing the fingers [over them], producing a pleasing sound.[7]

Further testimony of the popularity of the *būq* in al-Andalus is offered in a lively description of a wedding celebrated in the streets of Cordoba authored by the biographer al-Ḥumaydī:

> I found myself at a wedding in the streets of Cordoba, and al-Nakūrī, the *zāmir* (woodwind player), was seated in the middle of the crowd wearing a brocade cap on his head and a suit of raw silk in the *'ubaydī* style. His horse was richly decorated and was held by his servant. In the past he had performed before 'Abd al-Rahmān III. He performed verses by Aḥmad ibn Kulayb about [his beloved] Aslam on the *būq* and an excellent singer sang it while he played:
>
> Aslam, that young gazelle, delivered [*aslama*] me to passion,
> An antelope with an eye that obtains whatever he desires.

An envier slandered us, and questions will be asked of that slander.
If he desires a bribe for our union, my very soul shall be the bribe.[8]

This anecdote offers a description of a wedding celebrated in the streets of Cordoba featuring a player of the *būq* who had previously played before the caliph, and who is portrayed as being accompanied by a singer, rather than the other way around, presumably because he was the star of the show. In addition, the Aslam described in these verses by Aḥmad ibn Kulayb is none other than the Aslam who was the likely author of *Kitāb akhbār Ziryāb* (KAZ) analyzed in Chapter 4.

The popularity of the *būq* among the people of al-Andalus even found echoes in the popular literature of Castile. Juan Manuel (1282–1348), nephew of King Alfonso X the Wise, compiled a collection of didactic short stories and fables that he titled *El Conde Lucanor*, which includes a tale (Example 41) about a Moorish king named al-Ḥakam, usually identified as al-Ḥakam II (r. 961–76).[9] In this fable, the king ruled fairly, but made no effort to achieve deeds of valor or honor that would bring him fame after his death. Instead, he was content to stay at home and enjoy himself. One day he was playing an instrument that the Moors love a great deal called the *albogón* (i.e., the large *albogue*), when he stopped suddenly, saying that it did not produce a sound he wished. He took the instrument and added another hole, in line with the other finger holes, which produced the sound he sought. Since the king had accomplished little else during his reign, the people took up this "achievement" and turned it into a derisive refrain, "Wa hadi ziyadat al-Ḥakam" [the phrase occurs in Arabic in the Castilian text], meaning, "This is the addition/accomplishment of al-Ḥakam." When the king learned of this, it grieved him, but he decided not to punish those who said it. Instead, he resolved to accomplish something so momentous that his people would no longer mock him, so he set about completing the great Mosque of Cordoba, which until that point had remained unfinished. What had been a derisive taunt then became a phrase of praise, and even today the Moors say, "This is the addition/accomplishment of al-Ḥakam," when they wish to praise something well done.[10]

Two instruments depicted in the *Cantigas de Santa María* have been labeled by scholars with the Castilian terms *albogue* and *albogón*. Although the first term more closely resembles the Arabic word *al-būq*, it is the larger instrument that more closely corresponds to the detailed descriptions given by al-Tīfāshī and Ibn Khaldūn above [see Figure 1].

The body of the instrument consists of sections, one fitting into the other, the lower extremity appears to be made of metal (hence the references to a "trumpet"?), and the middle section appears to be of wood, ending with a metallic finial and a small double-reed with a "pirouette" (the metal disk at the base of the reed). The angled cut at the lower end is reminiscent of Ibn Khaldūn's phrase, "shaped like a trimmed reed-pen." It would appear then that the Arabic term *būq* refers to the *albogón*, and not to the instrument

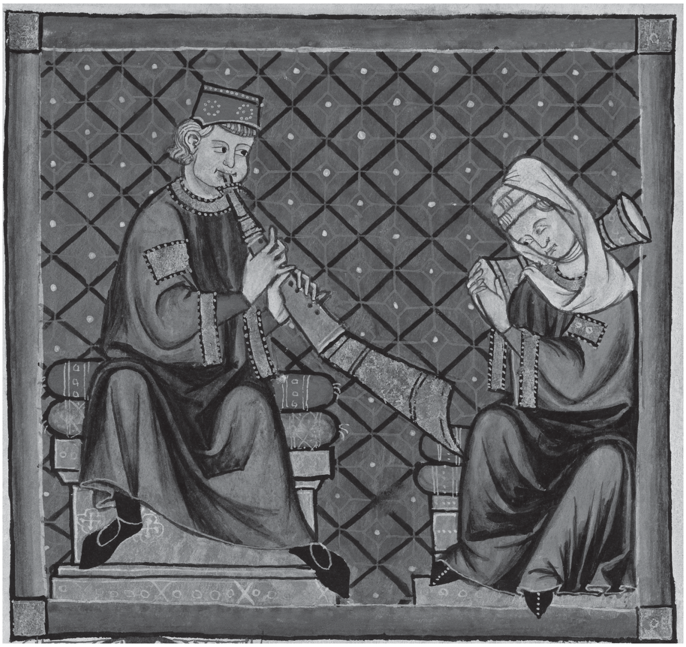

Figure 1 Cantigas de Santa María (13th c.), *albogón.*

referred to in Spanish as the *albogue* [see Figure 2]. The larger instrument has not survived, but the smaller instrument, the *albogue*, has continued into modern times as the Basque *alboka* [see Figure 3] and in other regions of Spain is called a *gaita* [see Figure 4].[11]

In sum, the emir Muḥammad I was devoted to the *būq,* which, it seems, could be played as a solo instrument or to accompany singing, perhaps even in groups. Whether or not he also owned *qiyān* is not clear, but at least one of his sons did. The very last anecdote in Ibn al-Qūṭiyya's history recounts an altercation between two sons of Muhammad I involving a *qayna* named Bazīʻa ("Gracious"). Ibrāhīm came to visit his brother, ʻUthmān, while the latter was hosting a group of guests. To welcome his brother, ʻUthmān called to Bazīʻa, nicknamed "the Imām" because she was unmatched in her recitation of the Qur'an [*tajwīd*], and asked her to sing.[12] She sang the following verses:

> It delights my heart to see your visitors,
> My joy increases now that he who loves you is near.

ʻUthmān frowned in disapproval and as soon as Ibrāhīm had left, he grabbed a whip and, based upon the sentiments expressed in the verse "It delights my

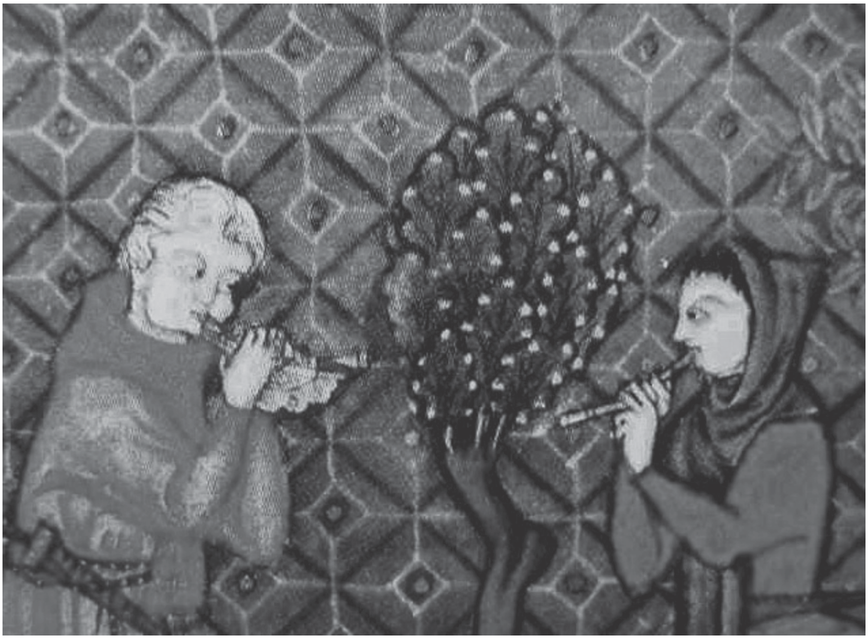

Figure 2 Cantigas de Santa María (13th c.), *albogue.*

heart to see your visitors," accused her of being in love with his brother and beat her. On a subsequent visit, ‘Uthmān again asked Bazī‘a to sing when his brother arrived and she sang:

> When I saw the faces of the birds, I said
> The raven of separation and aversion is not welcome.[13]

This time it was Ibrāhīm who was angered by the lyrics of her song and complained to his brother, who promised to give her 500 lashes. Fortunately, one of the other guests intervened and asked how she could be punished a second time. When Ibrāhīm heard of the previous incident, he declared that his brother's jealousy was so extreme that he would never again visit him and left.[14]

For the final years of the Umayyad caliphate, Ibn Faḍl Allāh's *Masālik* once again provides highly significant evidence. In Chapter 3 we noted that the biographical notices of Andalusi musicians in his work consist of two clusters, separated by nearly 200 years. The first cluster of nine biographies are from the reign of al-Ḥakam I (r. 796–822) and from the household of his younger son, al-Mughīra, but the second cluster of musicians flourished during the last chaotic years of the Umayyad dynasty. Seven of these musicians are reported to have performed in the courts of the final Umayyad caliphs.

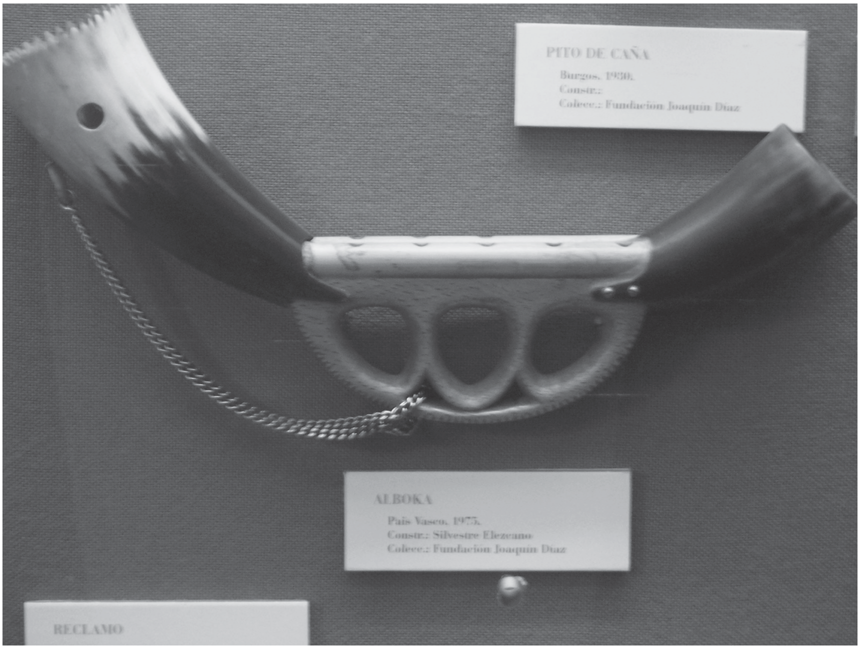
PITO DE CAÑA
Burgos, 1930.
Constr.:
Colecc.: Fundación Joaquín Díaz
ALBOKA
País Vasco, 1975.
Constr.: Silvestre Elezcano
Colecc.: Fundación Joaquín Díaz
RECLAMO

Figure 3 Modern *alboka*, Fundación Joaquín Díaz, Urueña. (Source: author photo).

Waḍīḥ ibn ʿAbd al-Aʿlā was a male singer who performed for al-Mu'ayyad Hishām II ibn al-Ḥakam II (r. 976–1008, 1010–12), and also for al-Mustakfī bi-llāh Muḥammad III ibn ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn al-Ḥakam (r. 1024–5). His biography consists of an introduction praising his singing, an account of a performance before Hishām II of a six-verse song drawn from a longer poem by al-Jarīr, followed by an anecdote describing his return to Cordoba and the court of Muḥammad III after a long absence. When his traveling party was still one day's journey away, his longing grew so strong that he set two verses by the poet al-Ḥusayn ibn Maṭīr to music and began to sing them aloud in a style "between the singing of the *rukbān* and the *ḥudā*'" [*bayna ghinā' al-rukbān wa-l-ḥudā'*] such that news of his arrival preceded him. As soon as he entered the residence of the caliph, the caliph said to him, "Sing what you have composed!" He immediately began to sing, and the caliph was so pleased that he nearly fell off his dais, and then rewarded him with costly cloth and 300 dinars.[15]

Ibn Saʿīd al-Kāmil (Kāmil ibn Saʿīd in the TK and BN mss.) was a close companion to al-Mu'ayyad Hishām II. His biography focuses on his intimate friendship with Hishām II recounting that he was even allowed to visit the caliph in his private chambers at night where "the bellies of his slave girls were

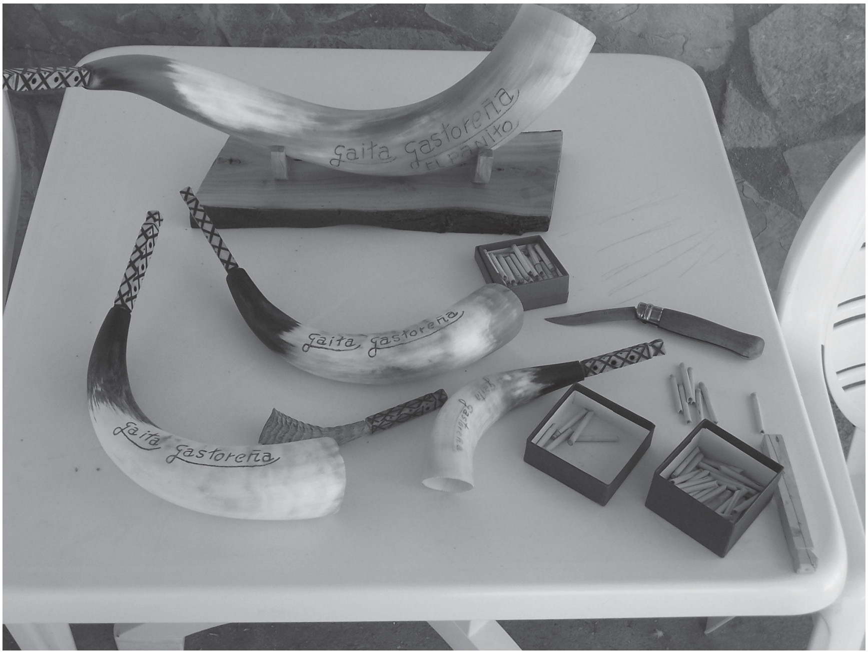

Figure 4 Gaitas crafted in the village of El Gastor, Andalucía.
(Source: author photo).

his bedding" [*ḥaythu yakūn … buṭūn al-jawārī sarīrahu*], and the caliph was utterly at ease with his presence [*kāna minhu lā yataḥāshā wa-lā yajid minhu īḥāshan*]. He was even charged with teaching the caliph's veiled female slaves the art of singing, till they enchanted all who heard them and brought their listeners to tears.[16]

One biography includes a remarkable account of a musician's travels to Christian lands, that of Ḥiṣn ibn ʿAbd ibn Ziyād. The text includes a number of poetic phrases, the exact meaning of which is difficult to parse, and in several places the three extant manuscripts and the three printed editions offer conflicting readings. The translation below is therefore an aggregate of the most likely interpretations, with footnotes indicating the key difficulties:[17]

> He was originally from North Africa [Ar. *barr al-ʿudwa*, lit. "the other shore"]. He entered al-Andalus clinging to the "sure handhold" of Islam.[18] He was a singer who was very amiable and restored joy whenever it had fled. The *heart of the night* felt compassion for him even though he was an unbeliever[19] and he took heart,[20] though he was more cowardly than a bird.[21] He entered the lands of the Christians, penetrated them

> deeply, settled there and felt at home among the infidels. Then he returned to the realm of Muslims, having earned nothing but the music [that he had learned there] after his long years [in the north]. He contacted his Highness [*al-ʻālī*], who was known for the acquisition of what was valuable. His Highness restored him to his former position and brought him back into the fold.[22] He continued to have Ḥiṣn attend him in private gatherings, and forgave him his offenses.[23]

The outlines of this narrative are fortunately clear: a singer from North Africa arrived in the Cordoban court, but for some reason left Cordoba and traveled for many years in the Christian North, then returned to Cordoba having only acquired the music that he learned there, but was welcomed back as a singer by the ruler. Thus, like the earlier 9th-century biography of Sulaym, this text offers historical evidence of musical contact between the Muslim South and the Christian North. A singer from al-Andalus spent years performing in the north – presumably performing Arab music – and then returned with the music he learned in the north and performed it for the ruler of Cordoba.[24] The text does not mention the ruler by name, but Ḥiṣn's biography falls between those of singers who performed for al-Mu'ayyad Hishām II ibn al-Ḥakam II (r. 976–1008, 1010–12) and an effeminate singer who belonged to the mother of Sulayman II ibn al-Ḥakam (r. 1009–10, 1013–16).

The reasons for Ḥiṣn's departure from Cordoba are opaque. Was he always a *kāfir*, and did this indicate that he was pagan (i.e., non-monotheist) or was he perhaps Christian, since Christians were at times referred to as such in Arabic texts? Had he perhaps nominally converted to Islam during his stay in Cordoba and then grew fearful and fled to the Christian kingdoms in the north? Or was he perhaps a Muslim who decided to convert to Christianity? Eckhard Neubauer has suggested (personal communication) that the image of the "heart of the night" (*qalbu l-layl*) may be a metaphorical reference indicating that Ḥiṣn was black and that he or his family may originally have come from further south in Africa.

If we take him to be of African origin, this would be very interesting both in terms of having another black singer in the Cordoban court (in addition to Ziryāb) and in terms of the music he might have been performing in Cordoba. The two songs of his that are cited further on in his biographical notice have lyrics by classical Arab poets and are in well-known rhythms and melodic modes, so he was clearly a singer who sang the standard courtly tradition. But did he also perform other repertory? It certainly appears that he brought repertory from the Christian North back with him after his years of living there, but would he also have brought non-courtly music with him from North Africa when he first arrived? In any case, this text stands as another noteworthy indication of a variety of different repertories being performed in the Cordoban court and a testimony to the facility with which musicians traveled across political and religious borders.

The next biography is that of Sāʿidah ibn Buraym, written in the same highly poetic rhymed prose, and once again the manuscripts and printed editions disagree at several key points. The overall story, however, is clear.[25]

> *Sāʿidah ibn Buraym*: A singer who was suspended from the stars[26] and brought to the ears [of his listeners] what delighted [them]. He tamed wild hearts and after him no successor stepped forward [to take his place]. It is said that he was originally a Christian [*min abnā' al-naṣārā*]. He rose from among the black frocks [of the priests] like a shining moon. He lived in monasteries and caused what therein was withered to become once again ripe and flowering. He secluded himself and loosened the firm wills of the monks [*al-ruhbān*].[27] He tightened his sash [*zunnār*] around his thin waist over full hips [*ghuṣn bān*]. The priests were seduced by his beauty and there took place, due to [their] love for him, what put to shame the War of Basūs.[28] So he left Christianity and converted to Islam – God only knows what was behind it [i.e., what motivated his conversion] and what his opinions were in doing so.[29] Then he fell in love with singing [*ghinā'*] and studied it [*ṭalabahu*], and then set out to acquire it. To this end he rode across the breadth of the sea, he [boarded the ship] in good spirits, and his berth was laid out for him.[30] Then [the sea] grew so turbulent that it almost did him in, and things got much worse than they had been before. However, he was saved by [grabbing onto] a wooden plank from the boat, though he had thought that his soul was lost. Afterwards he traveled on to Egypt, then to Syria and Iraq, and attained what caused delight and achieved what he had sought,[31] so much so that these pages are too few to describe it.

Again, the musical information to be gleaned from this text is clear, even if not all of the remaining details are. He was Christian, was apparently a very good-looking young man whose beauty caused disturbances among the monks due to their jealousies and desires, which were serious enough to cause him to convert to Islam (the sincerity of which is called into question in the text). After having converted, he became enamored of music and decided to study it. It appears that he first studied music in Cordoba and then traveled to the Mashriq to continue his career, surviving a shipwreck on the way, and eventually studied and/or performed in Egypt, Syria and Iraq. What this passage adds to our understanding of the traffic and trade in musicians is not only documentation of one individual's conversion to Islam, but of a singer who first studied music in al-Andalus and then traveled eastwards to pursue his career there. This eastward journey was a well-known trajectory for Andalusian scholars and poets, but far less so for singers and musicians.

Saʿīd al-Majdhaʿ (or Saʿd al-Mujadhdhaʿ) was a client of the mother of Sulayman II ibn al-Ḥakam (r. 1009–10, 1013–16).[32] He was, in the unflinching words of his biographer: "a male in which the female [*takhnīth*] predominated, a man who shared with women their femininity. He was malicious, always scurrying around at night, for he was never happy except in a tavern, and never went anywhere except where he could gain something with his songs […] He adorned his neck with necklaces when he should have girded himself with swords, and had intercourse through his rump into which so many cocks disappeared …"[33] This appears to be the only reference to a *mukhannath* (effeminate) singer in al-Andalus, although *Ḥisba* manuals, guides for the "regulator of the marketplaces and public morals" [Ar. *muḥtasib*], give brief instructions such as, "Be strict with the *mukhannathūn* – do not let them grow their hair long or attend banquets or weddings."[34]

Radāḥ was the female slave of ʿAbd al-Rahmān V al-Mustaẓhir (r. 1023–4). After a description of her physical beauty her biographer says that she was so extraordinary that many charming and complimentary anecdotes about her circulated in the court. She was also an excellent poet and a composer of remarkable songs. The caliph once decided to go out on an excursion and planned to camp in tents that had been erected for him alongside a beautiful waterfall. The weather, however, first turned dark and gloomy and then cleared. When his female slaves came to say goodbye, Radāḥ stood among them bathed in tears. She stepped forward and sang first one song and then another, which so moved the caliph that he embraced her in front of all those present. Then he turned to the other female slaves and asked if any woman had ever done what Radāḥ had just done and ordered that she accompany him on his excursion. She refused, however, and said that she would not leave with him unless all of her "dear companions" [*ṣuwayḥibāt*] did as well. To which he replied, "Then let them all come!"[35]

The accounts above demonstrate that the tradition of courtly music performed by female *qiyān* and male professional singers continued uninterrupted from the 9th century to the first third of the 11th century and the collapse of Umayyad rule. Other than the few poems composed by the *qiyān* themselves, all of the verses in these songs are from Eastern Arab poets; there is still no sign of an Andalusi poet, nor is there any mention of Ziryāb.

Gerbert d'Aurillac

Turning to Latin sources, one final biography from this period offers not only an extraordinary account of cultural contact, but also serves to remind us that musical knowledge is not necessarily carried from one place to another by professional musicians. Gerbert of Aurillac was born around 945 in Occitan (southern France), the very heart of what was to become the land of the Troubadours a little over a century later. As a youth he was sent to study at the monastery of Vic, near Barcelona, where he excelled in mathematics. Adémar de Chabannes (ca. 989–1034), who was both a historian and a musical composer, offers a laconic account of Gerbert's youth in his *Chronicon Aquitanicum et Francicum* or *Historia Francorum*:

> Gerbert of Aquitaine, a man of lowly origins, became a monk at the monastery of St. Geraud of Aurillac; out of his love of knowledge he traveled through France before visiting Cordoba.[36]

Later historians have challenged the idea that he traveled as far south as Cordoba, and frequently assert that he only studied at the monastery of Vic in Catalonia and never traveled further south, leaving open the question of why Adémar, his near contemporary, should claim that he did.[37] If Gerbert did study only at Vic, it would appear that he studied the sciences from Arabic texts, or ones recently translated from Arabic.[38] It is known that at one point he requested to borrow a treatise on the astrolabe from Sunifred Lobet [Llobet], in nearby Barcelona, who had recently translated it from the Arabic. Although it is difficult to disentangle fact from legend regarding several aspects of Gerbert's life, he is credited by various sources with having brought to Christian Europe the abacus and higher mathematics, and having invented the pendulum clock. When he returned to France, his knowledge of mathematics and science was so far beyond that of his peers that rumors quickly spread that he versed in the "black arts" and was in league with the devil himself. Despite these rumors, he rose rapidly through the ranks of the church and in 999, at the very eve of the first millennium, he was elected pope and reigned until 1003 as Pope Sylvester II.[39] For our purposes, it is noteworthy that Gerbert was not only a native Occitanian and schooled in the Arabic sciences, but had also studied music. He took the mathematical knowledge that he had gained during his sojourn in Iberia and authored a treatise on the tuning of organ pipes and monochords ("De commensuralitate fistularum et monocordi cur non convenient"), and two additional personal letters have survived containing his comments on Boethius' *De musica institutione*.[40]

Musicians, free and enslaved, crisscrossed the medieval Mediterranean for several centuries on various itineraries that linked disparate regions in a complex network of cultural contacts and exchanges. The case of Gerbert d'Aurillac reminds us that musical knowledge can travel in various forms: a musical instrument, a manuscript, a half-remembered melody, or more extensive knowledge garnered from longer periods of contact. These scattered accounts that have by chance survived in medieval texts are almost certainly indicative of a broader, lively network of travels by musicians and singers who did not appear in the royal or caliphal courts and therefore did not attract the attention of historians. For scholars who seek to trace musical "influence" from one culture to another, it is crucial to remember that the surviving written documentation represents only a tiny fraction of the richness of medieval musical life, and that the vast majority of cultural exchanges, interactions, and hybridizations took place at levels that are invisible to modern eyes and unperceivable by modern ears.

Notes

1 My sincere thanks to Luis Molina for assisting me in finding this passage and for providing images of the original manuscript. Shiloah 2001: 12 makes reference to

this passage, but the citation in his footnote is incorrect. See Ibn Ḥayyān 1973. See also Molina and Penelas 2011 and 2015.

2 Makkī (Ibn Ḥayyān 1973) reads *ikhtirāʿan*, but I am only able to make out *wa – kh – ʿan*.

3 Makkī (Ibn Ḥayyān 1973: 291, fn. 4) provides the following remark:

> It appears from the first passage on this page [259r] that the [missing lines] at the bottom of the previous page dealt with the emir's attachment to these musicians whose craft he loved so passionately. It appears that ʿUbāda ibn ʿAbd Allāh mentioned in the missing lines that the emir himself took delight in playing and that he had a special room where he would gather with these musicians, and to one side of this sitting room was a place where each musician would leave his *būq* and other instruments. Among these *būq*s and instruments could be seen one *būq* that was more splendid than the others…

Makkī's depiction of a special room and a place set aside for the instruments is, however, drawn entirely from his own imagination, not from the text.

4 The confusion in this passage results from al-Tīfāshī's use of the term *būq* with two separate meanings. Here he presumably means that the Andalusi *būq* was as large as the instrument usually called a *būq*, meaning a trumpet or horn.

5 al-Ṭanjī 1968: 115–16; cf. Liu and Monroe 1989: 43–4.

6 Given the description of the instrument and Ibn Khaldūn's choice of adjectives, we might imagine the sound of the *būq* to be somewhat similar to that of the English horn (cor anglais) or oboe d'amore, that is, more "muffled" than the more piercing, open bored shawm or oboe.

7 Adapted from Ibn Khaldūn 1958: II, 396 (trans. F. Rosenthal).

8 al-Ḥumaydī 1966: 143.

9 Either both of these Umayyad rulers (Muḥammad I and al-Ḥakam II), who reigned nearly a century apart, were devoted to the *būq* or the wrong name has been included in the Castilian fable.

10 Manuel 1993: 238–41.

11 See Juan Bautista Varela de Vega, "Anotaciones historicas sobre el Albogue," *Biblioteca Virtual Miguel de Cervantes* (www.cervantesvirtual.com) for information on modern folk versions of the albogue in Spain.

12 For an account of this performance and a discussion of the architectural spaces for musical performances in Umayyad Cordoba, see Anderson 2018.

13 The crow or raven (*ghurāb*) is considered an omen of misfortune in Arab culture and often occurs in the phrase *ghurāb al-bayn* (the raven of separation, i.e. from loved ones). In addition, the term "birds" (*ṭuyūr*) can also mean "omens."

14 Ibn al-Qūṭiyya 1989: 125–7; Ibn al-Qūṭiyya 2009: 141 (trs. David James)

15 Jubūrī, 433–5; Khashaba 488–90; Sarīḥī, 604–6.

16 Jubūrī, 435–6; Khashaba 490–1; Sarīḥī, 606–8.

17 Jubūrī, 436–7; Khashaba 491–2; Sarīḥī 608–9.

18 *Al-ʿurwa al-wuthqā* is a Qur'anic phrase that occurs in two places (*Sūrat al-Baqara* 256 and *Sūrat Luqmān* 22). The original meaning of *ʿurwa* is a bond, tie, fastener, or handle, such as those used to tie loads onto animals of burden, or the handle of a leather bucket used to draw water from a well. *Wuthqā* means sure, certain, or trusted. Qur'anic commentators have variously identified the "sure handhold" as the Qur'an itself, the credo "There is no god but God," faith, the love of God, or simply the religion of Islam.

19 Ar. *wa-raqqa bihi qalbu l-layl ʻalā annahu kāfir.*

20 *Shajjaʻ quwā al-qalb* in Khashaba; *shajjaʻ qawī al-qalb* in TK, BN, and al-Sarīḥī; *sajjaʻ qawl al-qalb* in al-Jubūrī; *shajjaʻ q-w-y al-qalb* in AS.

21 *Ṣāfir,* a type of shy, cowardly bird, see *Lisān al-ʻarab*; cf. al-Maydānī, *Majmaʻ al-amthāl*, no. 980.

22 Ar. *lamma sh-ʻ-b-h*, voweled *shiʻab* in BN and Khashaba; *sh-ʻab* in AS; unvoweled elsewhere. I have amended this to the common expression *lamma shaʻathahu*.

23 In AS *t-ḥ-n-b-h*; in TK *y* or *t –g-n-y-h*; in BN *t-j-nn-b-h*; in Khashaba *yujannibuhu*; in al-Sarīḥī and al-Jubūrī *tajannabahu* (set aside, get out of the way).

24 The title of the ruler of al-Andalus was changed from emir to caliph in the 10th century, by ʻAbd al-Raḥmān II (r. 912–61), but it is unclear if Ibn Faḍl Allāh, a Syrian, would have known of or honored this change.

25 Jubūrī 437–8; Khashaba 492–3; Sarīḥī 609–10.

26 Lit. from *suhā*, dim star in Ursa Major, cf. Hava.

27 In Khashaba *al-ruhbān*; in AS, TK, BN, al-Sarihi and al-Jaburi *al-burhān*; I follow Khashaba's emendation.

28 A 40-year war fought between two closely related tribes in pre-Islamic Arabia.

29 In Khashaba and al-Sarīḥī *arā'ahu*; Jubūrī, *arā'adahu* [?].

30 In Khashaba *uliyat*; in AS, TK, BN, al-Sarīḥī and al-Jabbūrī *ulqiyat*.

31 The six different readings of this phrase are: BN *wa-radda min ṭilbatihi*; TK *wa-radda min kulliyatihi*; AS and al-Sarīḥī *w-r-d mā ṭilbat-hu*; Khashaba: *wurdu mā ṭilbatuhu*; Jubūrī *wa-wadda mā ṭilbat-hu.*

32 Jubūrī, 438–9; Khashaba 494–5; Sarīḥī 610–11; my thanks to Everett Rowson for his assistance in deciphering this text.

33 Ar. *hādhā l-dubur allādhī funiyat fīhi al-zubur*

34 Al-Saqaṭī 1968: 412 [176].

35 Jubūrī, 439–42; Khashaba 495–97; Sarīḥī 612–15.

36 Translated from the modern French translation of the Latin text, Adémar de Chabannes 2003. For Adémar's music, see Grier 2006.

37 The translators of his Chronicle from Latin to modern French state categorically in a footnote, with no supporting evidence: "Gerbert d'Aurillac only studied between 967 and 970 at the frontiers of the Caliphate, in the Spanish Marches, which maintained relations with the scholars of al-Andalus," Adémar de Chabannes 2003: 241, n. 321.

38 See Riché 1987 for a description of the various early accounts of Gerbert's life, culminating in the account of William of Malmesbury (d. 1141) who has Gerbert studying black magic under the tutelage of an Arab philosopher (9–15). For a discussion of the Arabic manuscripts copied and translated at the Monastery of Ripoll, see p. 25, n. 18). See also, Trystam 2000, who draws attention to the number of Arabic-speaking Christian monks who moved north to Catalonia (29) and Muslims who lived in Barcelona (31). Trystam oddly spends several pages describing the trade in luxury goods from al-Andalus northwards, but then ignores the obvious implications that people were traveling back and forth across the borders, concluding that Gerbert could not possibly have traveled south to al-Andalus because such travel was only undertaken by high-level diplomatic missions (27–36). His superiors, she writes speculatively, rejected his requests to travel to Cordoba: "*Il n'est pas question qu'il se rende à Cordoue. Qu'y ferait-il? Qui sait ce qu'il y apprendrait, qui il y rencontrerait? Ceux qui sont revenus racontent; mais combine ne sont jamais revenus?*" [Traveling to Cordoba is out of the question.

What would he do there? Who knows what he would learn there and whom he might meet? Those who return tell stories, but how many have never returned?] (34)

39 It is fascinating to note that the Pope in the year 1000 may have studied in al-Andalus, or in any case was familiar with Arabic texts, while one hundred years later, Pope Urban II (r. 1088–99) was vehemently opposed to contact with Muslims, and is most famous for launching the First Crusade.

40 Huglo 1980.

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Section Three

Music in the medieval Mediterranean

In Chapter 8 we will examine the musical revolution that began in the 10th–11th centuries in al-Andalus and eventually left its mark on multiple musical traditions that have survived until the present day. The remarkable development of a radically new strophic song-form – the *muwashshaḥ/zajal* – has been explored by a large number of scholars, but almost always within a purely Iberian context. This approach views al-Andalus as an isolated conduit through which culture flowed from the Islamic empire through Iberia into Europe (though Muslim Sicily is sometimes taken into account, as well). Recent scholarship in Mediterranean Studies, however, suggests that it may be productive to reconceive of medieval Iberia as a region that participated in many active networks of contact and exchange. This section (Chapters 6 and 7) argues that insights gained from this latter approach may be particularly important when it comes to understanding medieval musical cultures.[1]

To modern ears, the sonic landscape of Late Antiquity would no doubt have sounded strange and foreign: a multitude of harps and lyres, sometimes playing together in large groups or processions, panpipes and double-flutes (*aulos*), cymbals, rattles, and drums, and groups of brass instruments sometimes accompanied by portative organs.[2] From the 7th to 10th centuries, however, new instruments arrived in the Mediterranean and a distinctive musical landscape began to emerge that would sound much more familiar to modern listeners. The following two chapters explore various aspects of this period of transition through the lens of an idea developed by Brian Catlos for describing the overall state of the medieval Mediterranean.

"Mutual intelligibility"

Although the Mediterranean was, and continues to be, a region characterized by a great diversity of cultures, the medieval era was one that saw the establishment of a number of socio-political infrastructures and cultural repertoires that, while they differed in detail, possessed some remarkable similarities. During this period, for example, large portions of the Mediterranean were ruled by foreign military elites: Germanic Visigoths invaded and ruled Iberia (5th–8th c.); Arabs conquered and ruled the southern and eastern regions of the Mediterranean from the 7th century onwards; Normans took control of Sicily and parts of southern Italy (11th–12th c.); European Crusaders established kingdoms in the "Holy Land" (12th–13th c.); Fatimids from North Africa seized and ruled Egypt (10th–12th c.); the Amazigh dynasties of the Almoravids and Almohads subdued Muslim Spain (11th–13th c.); and various Turkic groups, such as the Seljuqs (11th–13th c.), invaded and established themselves in regions of the Eastern Mediterranean and the Iranian Plateau. What is noteworthy here is that most of these conquests were not cases of an established dynasty or empire expanding by acquiring contiguous territories, but rather military groups who uprooted themselves from their place of origin, traveled great distances, conquered new territories, and then sought to establish themselves in these locations as legitimate rulers. As a result, these military elites often constituted only a tiny percentage of the overall population and most often spoke a different language, practiced a different religion (or a different version of a religion), and were of a different ethnicity from the populations they ruled.

The modern concept of a "religious minority" is ill suited to describe the religious situation in this era. In modern times, this term conjures up images of small religious communities oppressed by a larger religious community. In the medieval Mediterranean, however, it was just as likely that the "religious minority" was in fact the ruling upper class, and their religion was often the "state" or "official faith," and therefore the dominant religion. In contrast, the demographic majority of the population often practiced another religion (or another form of the same religion), and it was the majoritarian faith that was subject to various restrictions. A small group of Arian Visigoths, for example, ruled over a Latin Catholic majority (until the Visigothic conversion to Catholicism in 587), and Arab Muslims were but a tiny minority among the various forms of Judaism, Christianity, and Zoroastrianism practiced by the vast majority of the population of their empire. Similar examples include the Shiite Fatimids ruling Sunni Egyptians, Latin Christian Crusaders amid the Muslim, Jewish and Eastern Christian inhabitants of their kingdoms, the fundamentalist-leaning Almoravids and Almohads and their more liberal Muslim Andalusi subjects, and Latin Catholic Normans governing Muslims, Eastern Christians, and Jews in southern Italy and Sicily. In most of these regions, there were rules and regulations that constrained those who did not profess the official religion of the state. These laws took various forms ranging from special taxes, restrictions on clothing and the riding of animals (sumptuary laws), the construction of places of worship, the purchase or sale of land, the practice of certain professions and crafts, and so forth.

The frequency of such disjunctions gave birth to recurring patterns of relations between ruling elites and subject religio-ethnic groups. Expulsions, exterminations, and forced mass conversions were in fact relatively rare in the medieval Mediterranean.[3] Instead, subject religious groups were frequently viewed as a valuable resource, not least as a source of income since they could be forced to pay special taxes. In addition, smaller religious communities were often co-opted by rulers to serve in sensitive positions with the court or state because they were wholly dependent upon the ruler for protection, hence the frequent use of Jewish physicians and financial officers in many courts around the Mediterranean, Samaritan physicians serving Ayyubid rulers in Cairo and Damascus, and Muslim tax collectors in Aragon.[4] When Muslims suddenly found themselves confronted with the idea of living under Christian rule in Iberia, there was thus already a category within their worldview into which they could reclassify themselves – they were now the equivalent of *dhimmis* under Christian rule as Christians and Jews had been *dhimmis* under Muslim rule.[5]

Whatever the tensions may at times have been between Jews, Christians, and Muslims, their religions all operated within a shared theological framework based on the worship of an All-Powerful Eternal Creator, a sequence of revelations through prophets, the existence of Holy Scriptures, and so forth. When public debates and disputations were held, they could be held precisely because all parties partook of many (perhaps even most) of the same articles of faith about God, His judgment, prophets, scriptures, prayers, and so forth. In practical daily life, there were many other areas of shared social practices that could be cited.

Brian Catlos has developed the term "mutual intelligibility" to capture this concept of shared socio-political infrastructures and the idea that travelers from one region would find themselves in different cultures as they moved from one place to another, but often within a number of common frameworks and shared configurations that they would have recognized.[6] Speaking of Latin Christendom, he writes:

> For all that separated them, Muslims and Christians (and Jews), spoke the same languages, held many of the same social values, ate many of the same foods, and even shared much by the way of folk tradition, religious belief and theological orientation. Their cultures and actions were characterized by a "mutual intelligibility" that emerged from the broad socio-cultural habitus – originating with common sources, but refracted distinctly through the specific traditions of each ethno-religious culture – within which Christians, Muslims and Jews all lived their lives and pursued their agendas, whether individual or communal. Even as they worked to maintain their particular religio-cultural identities, they borrowed freely from each other's traditions, did business with each other, and socialized with each other, however askance Christian authorities or those of their own communities might regard this.[7]

The gist of this concept is that although there certainly existed a multitude of cultural, religious, and political differences among the various cultures of the medieval Mediterranean, these distinctions existed to a great extent within a larger frame of shared social structures and cultural repertoires.

These two chapters explore the possibility that there also existed a type of *musical* "mutual intelligibility" in the Mediterranean that facilitated the movement of musicians, musical instruments, concepts in music theory, and performance practices in multiple directions. In what follows, we will examine shared features of the musical world of the medieval Mediterranean in three distinct areas: 1) musical instruments; 2) music theory; and, 3) performance practices. Each of these sections concludes with a discussion of how al-Andalus fit into the ongoing networks of the larger medieval Mediterranean.

Notes

1 The chapter was inspired by the work of Brian Catlos and Sharon Kinoshita and by the NEH summer seminar that they hosted in Barcelona in July 2015, "Negotiating Identities." The basic ideas behind this chapter were greatly enriched by my discussions with the participants in that seminar (see Acknowledgments).

2 See, for example, the floor mosaic from the site of Leptis Magna (Zliten, Libya), where an ensemble consisting of a portative organ, a Roman *tuba* (straight trumpet) and two *cornua* (circular horns) are depicted as accompaniment to gladiators fighting each other and wild animals (Archaeological Museum, Tripoli, Libya).

3 Compare, for example, the long list of expulsions of Jewish communities from northern European cities and regions from the 9th to the 14th centuries.

4 Meyerhof 1938; Boswell 1977; Wedel 2000 & 2001.

5 The term *dhimmī* or *ahl al-dhimma* (lit. "people of the *dhimma* pact") refers to non-Muslims living under Muslim rule who were considered "protected people," meaning that their lives and property were protected as long as they remained loyal to the state and paid the *jizya* tax.

6 Catlos 2014: 509, see also 508–35, as well as his lectures "The Paradoxes of Plurality and Diversity in the Medieval Mediterranean" (28 July), "Ethno-Religious Relations; Physics of Scale" (20 July), "*Conveniencia* or 'The Convenience Principle': A Model for Ethno-Religious Interaction in the Medieval Mediterranean" (13 July) at the NEH Summer Institute 2015, Barcelona, Spain. I thank Brian for permission to reference some of his as yet unpublished arguments here.

7 Catlos 2014: 509.

6 Instrumentarium

The Mediterranean Basin inherited from the ancient cultures of the Near East, as well as the cultures of ancient Greece and Rome, a large number of different instrument types: harps, lyres and zithers, horns and trumpets, flutes and oboes, bells and cymbals, panpipes, and a variety of percussion instruments. Notably absent from this catalogue are two instrument types that came to dominate medieval music and later the music of the European Renaissance: first, the "Arab lute," and second, the entire family of bowed string instruments.[1] The preference of Arabo-Islamic society for the short-necked lute as a primary instrument rather than the Greco-Byzantine lyre or the Iranian harp, as Neubauer has noted, "set the course – the main character – of art and court music in Islam as well as in the European Renaissance."[2] The diffusion of the Arab lute and the later arrival of the bowed string instruments radically reshaped the sonic landscape of the entire Mediterranean and represent a significant break from the musical cultures of Late Antiquity.

Several key Arabic sources offer descriptions, with varying amounts of detail, of the musical instruments known in the early Islamic centuries, and help trace the histories of those instruments. The most important of these are various treatises by al-Kindī (801–72),[3] al-Mufaḍḍal ibn Salama (d. after 903) *Kitāb al-malāhī wa-asmā'uhā* [*The Book of Musical Instruments and Their Names*],[4] Ibn Khurradādhbih (ca. 820–ca. 912), *Mukhtār min kitāb al-lahw wa-l-malāhī* [*Selections from the Book of Music and Musical Instruments*],[5] al-Fārābī (ca. 872–950/1), *Kitāb al-mūsīqī al-kabīr* [*The Great Book of Music*][6] along with the section on music from his *Iḥṣā' al-'ulūm* [*The Enumeration of the Sciences*],[7] and the *Kitāb al-Shifā'* [*The Book of Healing*] by Ibn Sīnā (d. 1037).[8]

A word of caution, however, is advisable before dealing with early and medieval Arabic and European sources on musical instruments: these sources offer both a plethora of instrument names as well as ample evidence that these names were applied inconsistently over space and time. In some cases, the same name designates two or more different instruments in different regions or time periods, in other cases the same instrument might be known by several different names. In addition, given the lack of regularized spelling, and the widespread adoption of instrument names from one language to another, the same name can be found transcribed in wildly different manners. Only a handful of medieval sources present descriptions detailed enough for us to ascertain precisely which instrument is being designated. As a result, many of the identifications of musical instruments found in medieval iconographic sources have been made *post hoc* by modern scholars in the light of later scholarly classifications, since very few of these sources provide labels or captions identifying the instruments pictured.[9] In most cases, we simply cannot be sure what musicians of that time and place would have called the instrument they are depicted playing. Adding to the difficulty in identifying ancient and medieval instruments is that instruments were not built to conventional sizes, nor were pitches standardized. Quite often instruments given the same name differed greatly in size, shape, and construction, as is the case, for example with the lute in the modern Middle East. Even figures as late as Martin Agricola (1486–1556) noted that good intonation could only be assured if a group of instruments were made at the same time, by the same maker.[10]

Despite these caveats, the documentary and iconographic evidence is quite rich and, when analyzed carefully, yields a fascinating portrait of the medieval instrumentarium.

The Arab lute

The Ancient World possessed a number of different forms of lutes – long-necked lutes such as those famously portrayed in images of ancient Egyptian singing girls, as well as some short-necked lutes, most of which had rather small sound boxes. Lutes, however, did not play a prominent role in either ancient Greek or Roman music where the most important string instruments were instead various forms of lyres, such as the *lyra, cithara, varvitos* (*barbitos* or *barbiton*), *phorminx, sambyke* (*sambuca*) and harps, such as the *epigonion*, *magadis*, and *pectis.*[11] These instruments all played significant roles in the performance of different styles of music, the recitation of poetry, and religious rituals. The sole member of the lute family found in ancient Greek and Roman music is the *pandoura* or *trichordon*, a long-necked lute with a small sound box that had, as one of its names indicates, three strings. It is far less often attested in the written record and in iconography than the other string instruments listed above; indeed, it is not attested at all before the 4th century BCE.

In contrast, Arab culture in the pre-Islamic and early Islamic periods possessed a number of different terms for short-necked lutes: *mizhar*, *muwattar*, *kirān*, *barbaṭ*, and *shabbūṭ*, but only one term for long-necked lutes, *ṭunbūr*. It is not known, however, whether these words for short-necked lutes represented different types of lutes or were in some cases terms that could be applied to the same instrument. What is clear, however, is that in the 7th and 8th centuries, one specific new type of lute emerged and became far more popular than the earlier types, the type that is now commonly referred to as the “Arab lute.” Though there are some who argue for Persian origins for the instrument, it spread with the Islamic conquests and is known almost universally by terms that derive from its Arabic name *al-ʻūd*.[12] The Arabic term means quite literally “the wood” or “the wooden one,” perhaps due to its wooden face, which may have distinguished it from other lutes that had skin faces. Its main characteristics are that it is short-necked, piriform, with a deep rounded belly and a peg box that is angled sharply backwards.[13] The instrument’s widespread popularity was apparently a result of its brighter and louder sound, in contrast with other forms of short-necked lutes.

Terms for “lute” derived from the Arabic al-ʻūd

Sp	laúd	Czech	loutna	Eng	lute	Turk	ut
Port	alaúde	Hun	lant	Ger	laute	Greek	λαούτο
Cat	llaüt	Serb	лаута	Pol	lutnia	Fin	luuttu
Fr	luth	Rom	lăută	Rus	лютня	Uzbek	ud

The earliest known representation of an Arab lute is found in one of the floor frescoes of the Umayyad desert palace, Qaṣr al-Khayr al-Gharbī, which bears an inscription stating that was built in 727 [see Figure 5]. However, the earliest detailed textual description of an *ʻūd* is found in a text by the 9th-century Arab writer al-Kindī, the opening lines of which announce his intention to describe the construction, tuning, playing technique and other information about the four-stringed instrument known as *al-ʻūd* (hereafter simply “lute”).[14] The text is divided into three chapters: 1) the construction of the lute; 2) on the strings and notes of the lute; and, 3) the placement and movement of the fingers. Although he goes on to give a very precise set of recommended proportions for constructing a lute, al-Kindī begins by noting that lutes differ in their

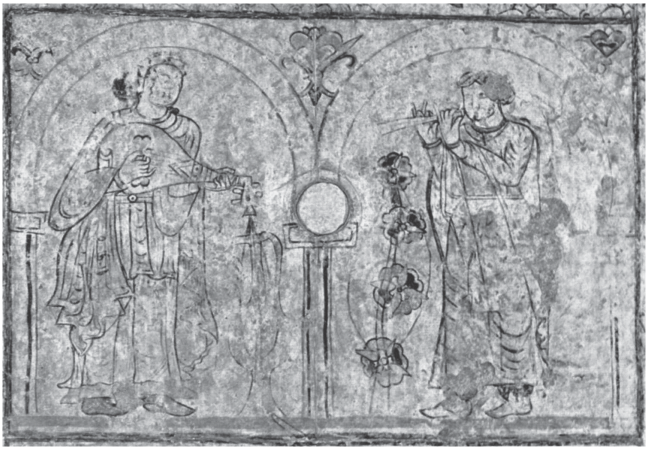

Figure 5 Floor fresco from Qaṣr al-Khayr al-Gharbī, completed 727 CE.
]

size, length, width, depth, shape, thickness, and thinness, so his description must be taken as prescriptive rather than descriptive.[15] Next he explains the correct placement of the frets, which are tied tightly so that they cannot easily be moved, and how to make the strings: the lowest string (*bamm*) is crafted from four plaited threads, the next higher string (*mathlath*) from three; the next higher string (*mathnā*) from two; and the highest string (*zīr*) from one.[16] He then describes tuning the strings in fourths, acheived by tuning the higher string to the note produced by the little finger on the lower adjacent string, but also notes that expert lutenists also use a variety of tunings, particularly for the lowest string (*bamm*), which they sometimes tuned to lower pitches.[17]

A longer and much more detailed account of the lute is found in al-Fārābī's *Kitāb al-mūsīqī al-kabīr* (hereafter KMK).[18] It is the first instrument dealt with in the section on musical instruments since it is "the most famous of the instruments" [*ashhar al-ālāt*]. He first describes the placement of the four frets, one for each of the fingers, with the interval between the open string and the little finger being a fourth, between the open string and the first finger a whole tone, and again a whole tone between the first and third fingers (leaving discussion of the various placements of the second-finger fret until later). He then discusses the tuning of the strings in fourths, such that each open string is tuned to the same pitch as the fourth finger on the next lower string, and finally engages in a discussion of variant pitches for the note termed the *wusṭā* (middle finger):[19] the "neighboring" (i.e., half-step) placement, the Persian middle finger, and the middle-finger placement of Manṣūr Zalzal, the great lutenist of the 9th century, who accompanied Ibrāhīm al-Mawṣilī in the ʿAbbāsid court of Baghdad.[20] He notes, however, that many musicians use notes beyond these basic pitches.[21] Because the standard tuning of four strings in fourths leaves the lute two notes short of a double octave, he reports several means for overcoming this deficiency. One can attach two additional frets and slide the hand down the neck of the instrument to reach the final two notes, one could change the tuning of the four strings (though this, he argues, poses a number of problems), or one can attach a fifth string, also tuned in a fourth, such that the first finger and third finger produce notes on the new highest string that complete the double octave. [See Figure 6]

Many additional significant details about the construction of the lute are found in the 11th-century treatise of Ibn Ṭaḥḥān, *Ḥāwī l-funūn wa-salwat al-maḥzūn* [*The Anthology of the Arts and Consolation for the Grieving*], a professional musician in the Fatimid court of Egypt.[22] The author recommends the use of two or three pieces of larchwood for the face, explains that the back is crafted from 11 or 13 strips of wood with paper fastened inside to hold the strips together, and describes the neck, nut, peg box, pegs, bridge tailpiece, and decoration. Ibn Ṭaḥḥān's lute is strung in double courses, for he specifies that there be eight pegs for a four-string lute, and ten if a fifth string (*zīr ḥādd*) is added. His lute is also quite large in comparison to the dimensions given in other medieval texts; however, a different interpretation of the measurements leads to more reasonable dimensions.[23]

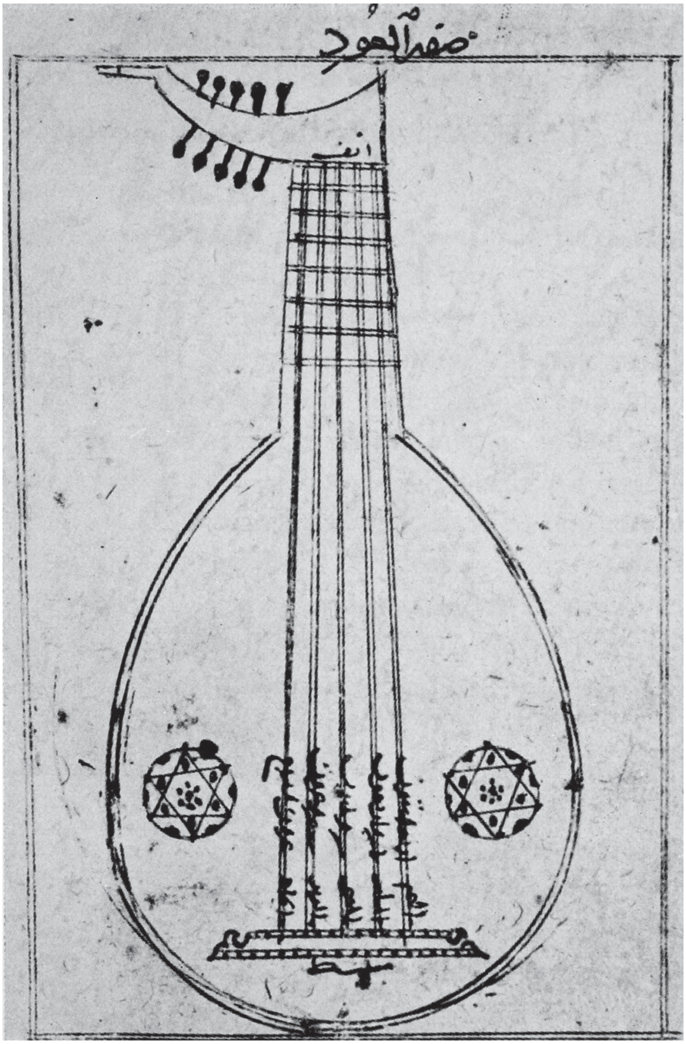

Figure 6 From a copy of Ṣafī al-Dīn al-Urmawī's *Kitāb al-Adwār* dated 1333, drawing of a lute strung in five double courses (note the ten pegs).

(Source: Oxford, Bodleian Library, Marsh 521, folio 157b).

Already by the 8th century, the piriform short-necked lute had became *the* primary instrument for the performance of art music in the Arabo-Islamic zone and the most common instrumental accompaniment for solo vocalists. The combination of a singer and a lute, whether played by the singer or by a separate musician, is the most widely documented form of musical performance in the Umayyad and Abbasid courts of Damascus, Baghdad, and also in Cordoba.

The long-necked lute known as the *ṭunbūr* was never as widely disseminated or used. Although it is attested in the *Kitāb al-Aghānī* and other sources, and there were famous *ṭunbūr*-players such as Jaḥẓa, who even compiled a volume of biographies of *ṭunbūr*-players (*Kitāb al-ṭunbūr*i*yyīn*), now lost, it was always considered an instrument of less importance than *al-ʻūd*. R. A. Martínez offers iconographic evidence from the Church of San Miguel de Lillo in Oviedo in northwestern Spain, completed in 842, of a long-necked *ṭunbūr*-like instrument, which may be the earliest Christian portrayal of an Eastern musical instrument in Iberia, and which might be the predecessor of the various long-necked lutes found in the 10th- and 11th-century Mozarabic illuminated *Beatus* manuscripts (see below). Both Martínez and Klein see Islamic and North African influences in a number of the depictions of lutes in these texts.[24]

The earliest depiction of an Arab lute in Iberia seems to be one that appears on the "Capital of the Musicians," often referred to by its Spanish name *el Capitel de los Músicos*, that would have rested atop a column, dated to the mid-10th century, and currently housed in the Museo Arqueológico y Ethnográfico de Córdoba. Two sides of this white marble capital feature musicians wearing ample, loose-fitting *sirwāl*-style pantaloons plucking lutes [see Figure 7].

One carving is missing the right arm, but in both images the piriform body and sharply angled peg box of the lutes are visible. In addition, the strings are clearly attached to a bridge which is set directly on the soundboard, rather than extending to the end of the instrument. Although the sculptor has in both cases reversed the grip of the left hand, the position of the left thumb and fingers is realistic.

Bowed string instruments

Bowed string instruments are so common in the post-medieval world, that many people assume that this is an ancient instrumental technique. It is not.[25] None of the ancient cultures of the Near East and neither Greece nor Rome knew the technique of sounding an instrument by drawing a bow across its strings. The technique appears to have emerged in Central Asia sometime around the 7th or 8th centuries CE and spread from that region in many different directions, eastwards as well as westwards. Viewing these instruments as a form of lute, modern western scholars of organology refer to this family of instruments as "bowed lutes."[26] The Byzantines, however, saw this new instrument as a type of lyre and simply reused the Greek term Λύρα [*līra* or *lūra*], an appellation that is still used in several regions of Greece and the Black Sea.[27] Bowed string instruments with a wide variety of body shapes are attested in Iberia and the rest of Europe and it has become common usage among Western musicologists to use the term "fiddle" to

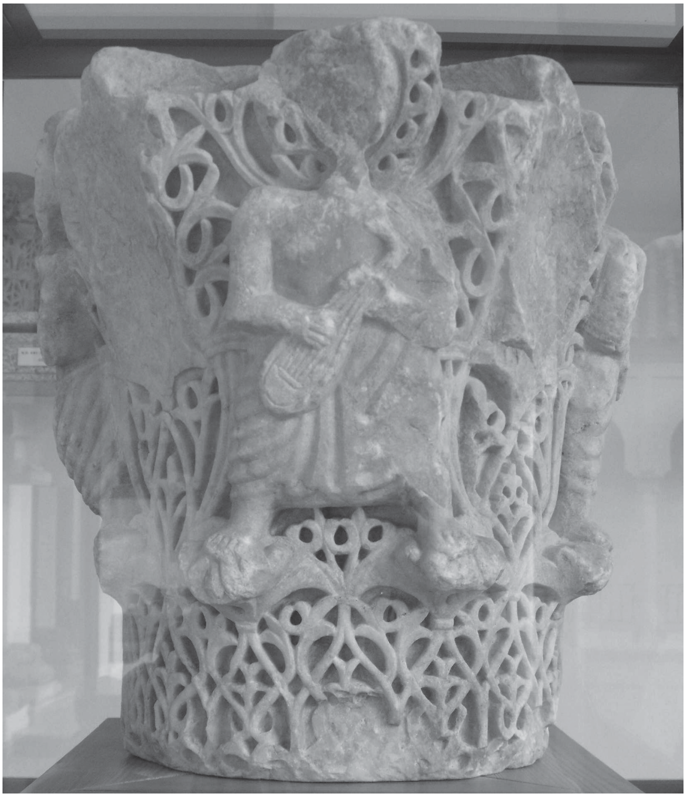

Figure 7 Capitel de los músicos, Cordoba, 10th century.
(Source: photo by Mariam Rosser-Owen).

refer to the entire family of bowed string instruments with its many different forms and names.

The earliest Arabic term for a bowed string instrument is *rabāb,* which was an instrument played vertically with the bow being drawn horizontally across the strings. This term seems to have functioned for many centuries as a name for any bowed string instrument. The first detailed description in Arabic sources is found in al-Fārābī's KMK.[28] He states that the *rabāb* may be set with one string, or with two strings of equal or of different thickness, but is quite often set with four strings. The strings are attached to a "button" (*zabība*) at the bottom of the instrument, like those of a *ṭunbūr.* Noting that the *rabāb* did not usually have frets, and the player must therefore place his fingers by ear, al-Fārābī offers a detailed description of how to place them correctly, and also of several accepted ways of tuning its strings: the two strings might be tuned one and a half steps apart (e.g., c–d#), two steps apart (c–e), or a fifth apart (c–g). Though *rabāb* players knew all three of these tunings, according to al-Fārābī they generally used the first. If they were accompanying a lute, however, they might use one of three different tunings: 1) a fourth apart (e.g., c–f), in which the *rabāb*'s two strings were tuned to the pitches of the lute's second and third strings; 2) a fifth apart (that is, c–g); or, 3) it could be tuned with only one whole step difference (c–d).[29] For al-Fārābī, the *rabāb*'s major weakness is that it is not as loud as some of the other instruments, though he judges it to be superior to the Khorassani *ṭunbūr*.[30]

In the 10th century, we find the first iconographic evidence for the spread of the *rabāb* into Iberia in the West and into Byzantium in the East. The earliest image of a bowed string instrument on European soil may again be that found on the "Capital of the Musicians."[31] [See Figure 8] As we have seen

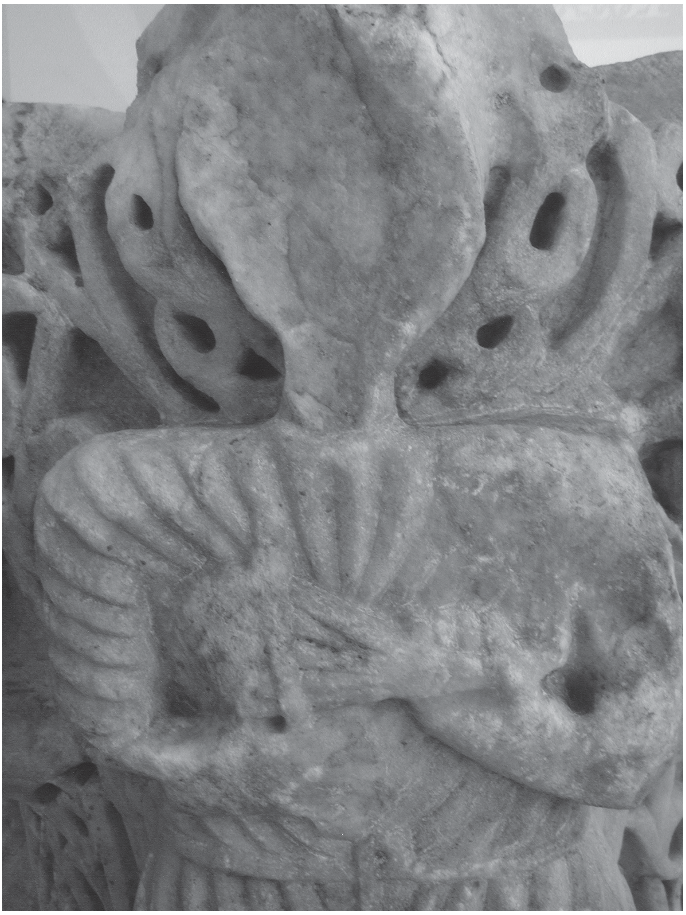

Figure 8 Capitel de los músicos, Cordoba, 10th century.
(Source: author photo).

above, two sides show musicians playing lutes, the third face is badly damaged by erosion but appears to portray a standing figure in flowing robes, which may represent a female singer, and on the fourth side is a musician playing a bowed string instrument held across the chest.[32]

In nearly the same time period, the first images of bowed string instruments appear in northern Spain in the remarkable "Mozarabic" *Beatus* manuscripts.[33] Beatus of Liébana (730–85) was an Iberian monk who penned a commentary on the *Book of the Apocalypse*, in which he reinterpreted the Beast as the coming of Islam and Babylon as Cordoba. The magnificent and highly original artwork of the surviving 27 illustrated manuscripts dating from the 10th and 11th centuries, has widely been attributed to Arabic-speaking Christians who fled north from Muslim al-Andalus, hence the term "Mozarabic" (from *musta'rab*, meaning "arabized"), though the various artistic influences in these works have given rise to extensive scholarly debates. In one image, the Seven Angels with Seven Plagues (Rev. 15:1, 6–8) appear floating in the air above and to the left of four musicians who are clearly playing bowed string instruments.[34] The instruments are very large and bulky, with three strings, and clear depictions of bridges at the lower end and nuts where the body of the instrument meets the neck. The round peg boxes have pegs pointing upwards and to the right and left, perhaps representing frontal pegs, somewhat reminiscent of the round peg boxes of the *baldosas* shown in the famous image of a Moor and Christian performing together in the 13th-century *Cantigas de Santa María* (see Chapter 11). The bows are very large and semi-circular (perhaps oversized for effect) and the instruments are held with one hand at an impossible angle, hanging vertically in the air. The overall impression is that the artist is attempting to portray an instrument that has been described to him, but which he has never actually seen.[35]

In another, slightly later image, however, featuring the Lamb of Zion on the Mount, four figures are portrayed playing fiddles that are much more realistic in size (cf. Rev. 15:2 "They held harps given them by God").[36] The two figures on the right are holding their instruments across their chest, while the figures on the left are holding their instruments just off the shoulder. The artist has depicted all of the instruments frontally, rather than the much less visually interesting sideview, with three strings and pegs, but without bridges or nuts. This image is usually dated to the very end of the 10th century or the early decades of the 11th.[37]

The Arabic term *rabāb* eventually generated the Spanish terms *rabel* and *rabé*, and later the French and English term *rebec*.[38] Over the course of the 11th century, depictions of various forms of bowed fiddles appear throughout Europe, including in Catalonia,[39] France,[40] Italy,[41] Germany,[42] and England.[43] R. A. Martínez has identified two images in the Escorial *Beatus* (Fol. 117 and Fol. 112v) that appear to portray Byzantine-style *lyra* fiddles, which may offer evidence of a second path of diffusion.[44]

In the 10th–11th centuries bowed instruments were also appearing in Byzantium and probably spreading from there to regions of Eastern Europe. [See Figure 9] Unfortunately, our knowledge of Byzantine musical

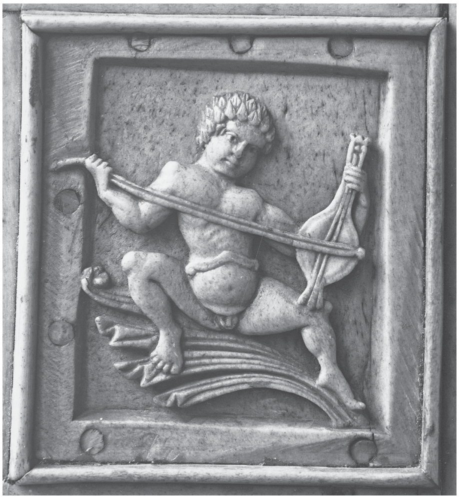

Figure 9 Byzantine *lyra* (ca. 1000), ivory casket.
(Source: Museo Nazionale Florence, Coll. Carrand No. 26).

instruments remains remarkably sparse, as has been noted by a number of scholars.[45] The precise dating of a carving on an ivory Byzantine casket depicting a bowed *lyra* has been the topic of considerable debate.[46] This image is noteworthy, however, as an early example of a "spike fiddle," equipped with an extension underneath for balancing the instrument on the ground, or, as in this example, on the thigh. Joachim Braun's study of illuminated Greek manuscripts from the 9th to 15th centuries held in the library of the Greek Patriachate in Jerusalem, however, offers four images of bowed fiddles from an 11th-century manuscript, probably written between 1066 and 1081, presumably in Constantinople.[47] Braun describes the bowed instrument as "a typical Byzantine fiddle, with lateral pegs, a long bow, and underhand grip of the bow."[48] In all four images, the fiddle is rested on the shoulder with the instrument pointed downwards, though this may be an artistic artifice to better show the details of the instrument.

By the 13th century, fiddles in northern Iberia had evolved into a variety of shapes, playing positions, and differing types of bows, as can be seen in the miniatures of the *Cantigas de Santa María.* In short, while the lute remained fairly stable in form for several centuries, the bowed string instruments almost immediately began to be produced in different shapes and sizes. Within a rather short period of time, we find sound boxes that are oval, figure-eight, rectangular, boat-shaped, and indented, with bows of varying sizes and shapes, and played in a number of different positions, including vertically, seated or standing, resting on the chest or the thigh, or played on the shoulder. [See Figures 10 & 11] This surprising variety may be the reason for the diversity

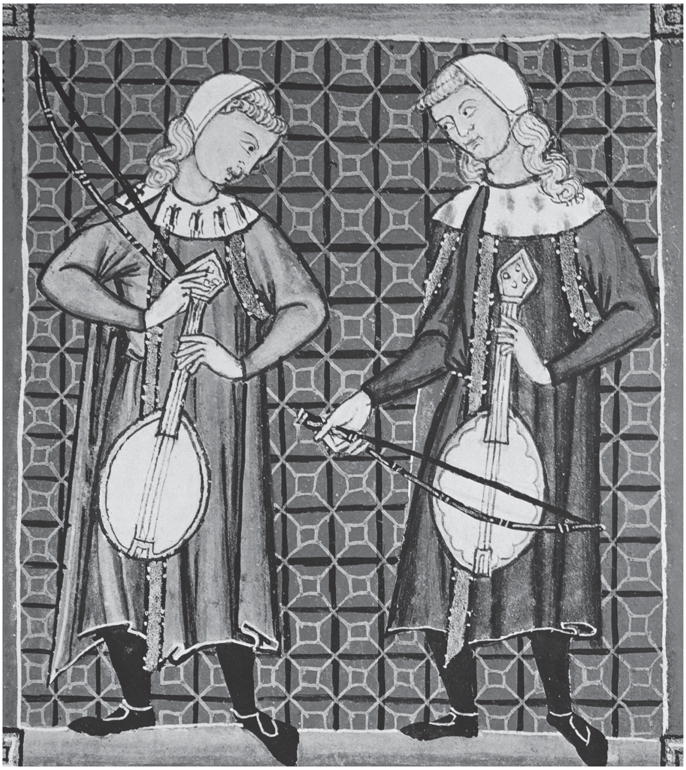

Figure 10 Cantigas de Santa María (13th c), bowed fiddles.

of terms for bowed string instruments in circulation during the 10th–14th centuries. These include the *rabāb*, *rabé*, *rabel*, *rebec* cluster, another group of variations of *vielle*, *vièle*, *vihuela*, *viol*, a third group of names deriving from *fídula*, *fiddle*, another set that refers to types of bowed lyres such as the *rota*, *rote*, *crwyd*, *crowd*, and, of course, the Byzantine *lyra* and the Franco-Germanic *gigue*, *geige*.

Although it might be tempting to see one instrument type as "Arab" or "Islamic" and another as "Byzantine" or "Christian," and attempt to identify linear chronological paths of transmission, the historical reality of musical culture in the Middle Ages, as in other eras, was constituted of multiple complex interacting networks. It takes but a single musician to bring a new instrument type from one region to another, and the movement of a single illuminated manuscript from one place to another can generate a series of copied images that have no relationship to the music of that place and time. We are forced to acknowledge that the historical evidence for the transmission of instruments in the medieval period is scattered and partial, and that the

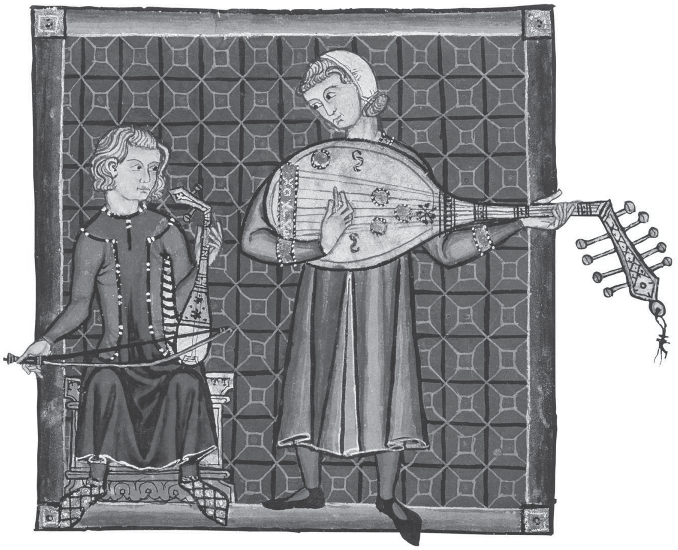

Figure 11 Cantigas de Santa María (13th c), *rabāb* and Arab lute.

evidence for what those instruments were actually called in specific times and places is even more incomplete.

To summarize then, in the 9th century, the northern Mediterranean did not yet possess either the "Arab lute" or bowed string instruments, but within a few centuries, both new instrument types had worked their way around the Mediterranean, ushering in an era during which nearly all musical instruments were more or less similar from one region to the next. Musicians traveling from one region to another would have encountered many different types of lutes, fiddles, flutes, and so forth, but they would rarely have encountered a type of instrument with which they were utterly unfamiliar.

Musical instruments of al-Andalus[49]

The single most detailed Arabic source on the musical instruments of al-Andalus is found in a manuscript that bears the name of one Muḥammad ibn Ibrāhīm al-Shalāḥī titled *Kitāb al-imtā‘ wa-l-intifā‘ fī mas'alat samā‘ al-samā‘* [*The Book of Joy and Benefit on the Question of Listening to Music* …] dated 1301.[50] This text forms part of a rich strand of Arabo-Islamic writing about music, sometimes termed the "*samā‘* debate," on the question of whether listening (*samā‘*) to music was permitted for pious Muslims.[51] This listing is therefore not a musicological description of musical instruments comparable to al-Fārābī's KMK cited above, but a guide to which musical instruments were licit or illicit, accompanied only by enough of a description for the instruments to be identifiable. In addition, the list of 31 instruments found in the second section of the first chapter (fols. 12v–18) appears to include a number of rare and archaic names culled from lexicographical works that were not actually in use in al-Andalus during the author’s lifetime. The author gives several terms that he says were for types of lute (*‘ūd*): *mizhar*, *kirān*, *ma‘āzif*, *‘azf*, *‘arṭaba*, and *kinnāra*, without further explanation, and another group of terms that he identifies as types of drum (*ṭabl*): *kabar*, *aṣaf*, *kūba*,*‘ayr*, and *safāqis*.[52] Many of the remaining instruments are, however, ones that we know to have been found in al-Andalus: tambourines and frame drums (*duff*, *ghirbāl),* Arab lute (*‘ūd*), fiddle (*rabāb*), harp (*ṣanj*), oboe (*mizmār*), horned shawm (*būq*), long-necked lute (*ṭunbūr*), Persian lute (*barbaṭ*), percussion wand (*qaḍīb*), reed flutes (*nāy, shabbāba*, *qaṣṣāba*), and drums (*ṭabl, kūs, kūba*).[53]

Several other lists of Andalusi instruments are found in literary texts of various sorts, but do not offer much in the way of description. Their significance, however, lies in the fact that these authors tended to cite only contemporary instruments, rather than names extracted from ancient works on lexicography. One of the most widely quoted is found in a work by Abū l-Walīd al-Shaqundī (d. 1231) titled “In Praise of al-Andalus,” preserved in al-Maqqarī’s 17th-century *Nafḥ al-ṭīb*. Singing praises of the city of Seville, he writes:

> [In Seville] you would have heard all the instruments of *ṭarab* [entertainment] of this land, such as shadow puppetry [*khayāl*], hobby-horse dancing [*karrīj*][54], the lute [*‘ūd*], the bowed lyre (rote) [*rūṭa*],[55] the zither [*qānūn*], the?? [*mu’nis*], the “cithara” [*kathīra*], the guitar [*qiṭār*][56], the flute [*zulāmī*], the [*shaqra*] and the [*nūra*], which are two types of woodwind, one with a rough sound and the other more delicate. Although all of these instruments exist in other cities of al-Andalus, in Seville they are more numerous and more common.[57]

Al-Shaqundī was clearly enumerating various forms of entertainment, not strictly musical instruments, and several of the terms remain obscure. The two main editors of the text, Dozy and ‘Abbās, offer different readings for some of the most problematic words: *al-mu’nis/al-danas*, *kathīra/kanīra*, *al-fannār/al-ghannār*, *al-shaqra/al-safra*.[58] Leaving aside those terms for which no positive identification can be made, we are left with a central core of instruments that echoes those listed in other sources: lute, flute, zither, and rote (bowed lyre).

As we saw in Chapter 5, several authors, including al-Tīfāshī and Ibn Khaldūn, cite the *būq* as the most characteristic and the “noblest” [*ashraf*] instrument in al-Andalus, and the emir Muḥammad I, son of ‘Abd al-Raḥmān III, was particularly devoted to it. The description offered by al-Ḥumaydī of a *zāmir* who had previously performed in the caliphal court playing the *būq* at a wedding in the streets of Cordoba, provides an indication that the instrument was equally popular among the masses. Another text that gives a sense of the role of the *būq* in Andalusi society is by Ibn Saʿīd al-Andalusī (1213–86), who links this instrument to a popular strophic form of poetry, the *zajal,* that we shall examine in Chapter 8. He reports that a certain physician named Yaḥyā ibn ʿAbdallāh ibn al-Bahbada, who worked in the service of the ruler: "Composed *zajals* as a caprice that people sing to the *būq* [*yughannūna bihā ʿalā al-būq*]."[59] He then includes the text of a *zajal* of this type that was nicknamed *al-Ṭayyār* (the Flyer). Normally, of course, the melody of a *zajal* or any other song should be able to be performed on any instrument – the lute, the *būq* or even sung *a capella* – so it is noteworthy that these *zajals* are associated with one specific instrument. Whether the implication is social (i.e., common folk sing *zajals* to the *būq* but in the court they are sung to the lute) or musical (i.e., there is a certain type of composition that fits the *būq*), however, is difficult to say.

Returning to literary lists of musical instruments, two of the most oft-cited examples from the Christian North are found in passages of the *Libro de Buen Amor* [*The Book of Good Love*], the fictional autobiography of one Juan Ruíz, the Archpriest of Hita, dating to 1330. In the first scene, a procession of clerics, monks, nuns and minstrels (*joglares*) go out on an Easter Sunday to greet "Don Amor" (Sir Love). The description is therefore not realistic, and the names of the instruments have been forced into the mold of rhymed quatrains, but it offers a glimpse of the instruments circulating in Christian Iberia in the early 14th century:[60]

Con muchos instrumentos salen los atanbores
Accompanied by many instruments, the big drums came out.
1228 *Allí sale gritando la guitarra morisca,*
Then came out the guitarra morisca [Moorish guitar] with strident sounds,
De las bozes aguda e de los puntos arisca.
With penetrating notes and surly tones.
El corpudo laúd que tiene punto a la trisca,
The corpulent lute which marks time for the *trisca* [a rustic dance],
La guitarra latina con ésos se aprisca.
The *guitarra latina* with them followed along.
1229 *El rabé gritador, con la su alta nota,*
The shrill *rabāb,* with its high note,
cab'él él orabin taniendo la su rota,
"My Arab Heart" played the rote [bowed lyre],[61]
el salterio con ellos, más alto que la Mota,
The psaltery with them, played higher than a mount,
La viyuela de péndola con aquestos y sota.
The plucked vihuela [type of lute] with them jumped about.

1230 *Medio caño e harpa con el rabé morisco,*
The small zither and harp with the Moorish *rabāb* played,
Entrellos alegrança el galipe françisco,
Along with them rejoiced the French *galipe.*[62]
La flauta diz con ellos, más alta que un risco,
The flute played out, higher than a peak,
Con ella el tanborete, sin él non vale un prisco.
Without the small drum, it's not worth a peach!
1231 *La vihuela de arco faz dulçes devailadas,*
The bowed vihuela produced sweet cadences,
Adormiendo a vezes, muy alto a las vegadas,
At times very softly, at times very loud.
Bozes dulzes, sabrosas, claras e bien puntadas,
Sweet sounds, delectable, clear, and well played,
A las gente alegra, todas las tiene pagadas.
Delighted the people, leaving them all well pleased.
1232 *Dulce caño entero sal con el panderete,*
The sweet large zither comes out with the tambourine,
Con sonajas de azófar fazen dulçe sonete,
Its jangles of brass making sweet little sounds.
Los órganos ŷ dizen chançones et motete,
Small pipe organs, yes, played songs and motets,
La hadedura alvardana entre ellos se entremete.
The *_hadedura alvardana_*[63] placed [itself?] among them.
1233 *Dulçema e axabeba, el finchado albogón,*
The dulcimer and Moorish flute, along with the puffed up *būq,*
Çinfonia e baldosa en esta fiesta son,
Hurdy-gurdy and *baldosa* [a plucked string instrument] in this fiesta are,
El françés odreçillo con estos se conpón,
The French *gaita* [small bagpipe] with them consorts.
La neçiacha bandurria allí faze su son.
The foolish *bandurria* [plucked string instrument] there made its sound.
1234 *Tronpas e añafiles salen con atambales,*
Trumps and Moorish trumpets come out with kettle-drums,
Non fueron tienpo ha plazentarías tales,
It's been a long time since such festivities took place,
Tan grandes alegrías nin atán comunales,
Such great rejoicing and communal gathering,
De juglares van llenas cuestas e criales.
Musicians filled every hill and dale!

Perhaps the most impressive aspect of this literary catalogue of instruments is the degree to which instruments with Arabic names or associations (*atanbores*, *guitarra morisca*, *laud*, *rabé*, *rabé morisco*, *axabeba*, *albogón*, *añafiles*, *atambales*, *medio caño*,[64] *caño entero*, *atambales*, *sonajas de azófar*,[65] *tanborete*, *rote*) are listed along with instruments that are more commonly associated with northern Christian Iberian culture (*guitarra latina*, *flauta*, *harpa*, *tronpa*, *çinfonia*,[66] *baldosa*,[67] *bandurria*, *odreçillo*, *dulçema*, *viyuela de péndola*).

An additional passage of great interest in the *Libro de Buen Amor* is titled "Instruments that do not fit Arabic Songs" (*En cuáles instrumentos non convienen los cantares de arávigo*). Our fictional hero Juan Ruíz is boasting of the many songs that he himself has composed "for Jewish girls and Moorish girls and girls who fall in love" (1513–15). He then states that he will list which instruments go best with different types of music:

1516 *Arávigo non quiere la viuela de arco,*
Arabic songs do not go well with the bowed vihuela
[a type of lute/viol],
Çinfonía, guitarra non son de queste marco
Hurdy-gurdy and guitar are not from that land either.
Çitola, odreçillo non amar çaguil hallaco,
The citole [a plucked string instrument] and gaita do not
love *_çaguil hallaco_*.[68]
Más aman la tavern e sotar con vellaco.
They prefer the tavern and to dance about with rogues.
1517 *Albogues e bandurria, caramillo et çanpoña*
[Rustic] albogues and bandurria, shepherd's flute and
panpipes,
Non se pagan de arávigo cuantos dellos Boloña,
Do not fit Arabs any more than they do [the law students]
of Bologna.
Como quier que per fuerça dízenlo con vergoña,
Whoever forces someone shamefully to play them,
Quien gelo dezir feziere pechar deve caloña.
Should pay the cost and bear the blame.

In general, this description agrees with the information given in other sources and appears to support the idea that the *albogue* was not considered an Arab instrument, but the *albogón* was. The *albogue* is here grouped together with several instruments that were considered to be very rustic, such as the panpipes and the flageolet or shepherd's pipe. Although al-Tīfāshī and other sources affirm that Andalusians like to sing to the bowed *rabāb*, the bowed *vihuela* for Juan Ruíz appears to be associated with northern Christian Iberia.[69]

Other instruments of al-Andalus

It is clear from the historical record that the lute, the *rabāb*, and the *būq* held pride of place in the musical world of al-Andalus, and using various texts it is possible to map out to some degree the musical and social role of these three instruments. In particular, various sources document that they were all used to accompany singers. Unfortunately, however, medieval Arabic sources are frustratingly taciturn when it comes to other musical instruments such as the zither (*qānūn*), rote (*rūṭa*), flutes (*nāy, shabbāba*, *qaṣṣāba*), long-necked lutes (*ṭunbūr*), and drums. Mentions of these instruments in a variety of texts, such as the lists examined above, provide testimonials of their existence and use in al-Andalus, but details about their construction, performance practices, and social roles are almost non-existent. Despite multiple references to the trapezoidal zither, the *qānūn*, for example, we cannot answer even basic questions about its role: Was it primarily a solo instrument? Was it used to accompany singers? Was it played in small ensembles?[70] Given the complexity of its design and the great difficulty of keeping its large number of strings in tune, we can surmise that it belonged to the world of high art music in courtly circles, rather than more popular or folk music, but it is difficult to go further. The situation is similar with other instruments such as the rote (*rūṭa*), the various flutes, and even basic percussion instruments. One welcome exception is a recent detailed study of the frame drum (*duff*, *ghirbāl*).[71]

Mauricio Molina notes in his *Frame Drums in the Medieval Iberian Peninsula* that there are virtually no iconographical portrayals of frame drums in Europe between the 5th and 10th centuries, despite the fact that they were well known in Roman times, and hypothesizes that Church authorities may have associated them with pagan rituals.[72] Beginning in the 10th–11th century, the Mozarabic *Beatus* manuscripts and later sources provide a plethora of images of frame drums (round, square, with and without jangles) paired with various instruments, including rebec, fiddle, lute, citole, and dancers.[73] In most medieval Iberian images of frame drums, the players are female, and the sources demonstrate that this was the case in all three of the major religious communities: Christian, Muslim, and Jewish.[74] The author further provides a reconstruction of the sound color of medieval Iberian frame drums, performance practices, and its symbolism based on iconographic and textual sources.[75]

Later iconographic sources from the Christian North, such as the 13th-century *Cantigas de Santa María*, offer much useful testimony about which instruments were played in medieval Iberia, but it is difficult to tell whether these instruments were found only in the north, were shared with Muslim al-Andalus, or were only played in northern Christian courts by visiting Andalusi musicians. As we shall see in Chapter 11, Muslim and Jewish musicians and entertainers regularly performed in northern Iberian courts up to the 15th century, often identified by the instrument that they played, such as "Hali [ʻAli] Ezigua the *rabāb* player."

In sum, al-Andalus was part of the overall change in instrumentarium that took place in the Mediterranean between Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages. Some instruments had been inherited from antiquity, others were more recent arrivals. Some, such as the Arab lute, remained relatively stable in form for centuries, while others, such as the bowed string instruments, almost immediately branched out into a wide variety of forms. For a period of a few centuries, musicians would have recognized and understood the many different musical instruments in the region of the Mediterranean as they traveled. At the level of basic musical technology, there was a period of "mutual intelligibility" when musicians would have had a general understanding of nearly every instrument they encountered.

The diffusion of musical instruments, however, does not necessarily imply the diffusion of music. An instrument does not carry with it any of the tuning, playing techniques, or repertory of its homeland. Impressive as the diffusion of many instruments through Arabo-Islamic lands and into the northern Mediterranean (along with many of their Arabic names) might be, this alone does not provide evidence for the exchange of musical ideas, melodies, techniques, compositions, and playing techniques. For information about how closely related Mediterranean musical cultures were, we must therefore look elsewhere.

Notes

1 Page 1990: 445 notes that the prestige chordophones in Europe up to the year 1000 had been the lyre and pillar-harp, but "by the 11th century both had been eclipsed by the instrument that dominates our view of the years between 1000 and 1300 – the bowed *viella* or fiddle."

2 Neubauer 2002: 364.

3 According to Shiloah (1974: 179), al-Kindī authored at least 265 treatises on various aspects of philosophy and the sciences, including music. Ibn Nadīm cites seven treatises on music in his *Fihrist* and Farmer (1939: 8–10), cites thirteen. See also *Mu'allafāt al-Kindī al-mūsīqīyya,* ed. Zakariyyā Yūsuf (1962; Suppl. 1965), esp. al-Kindī, *Kitāb al-muṣawwitāt al-watariyya.*

4 Ibn Salama 1938.

5 Ibn Khurradādhbih 1961.

6 Al-Fārābī 1967.

7 Al-Fārābī 1949; see Farmer 1934 [rpt. 1997]; this work was translated twice into Latin (both times titled *De scientiis*) in the 12th century, and was widely quoted by European writers until the 16th century; it was also widely known among Jewish scholars through Ibn 'Aqnīn's *Ṭibb al-nufūs* (*The Remedy of Souls*) and a condensed Hebrew translation by Qalonymos ben Qalonymos (d. c. 1328), Stevenson 1960: 19–21.

8 Ibn Sīnā 1956.

9 Among the small number of Arabic texts that provide images with identifying labels is the remarkable anonymous manuscript *Kashf al-ghumūm wa-l-kurub fī sharḥ ālāt al-ṭarab* (*The Unveiling of Grief and Sorrow in Commenting on the Instruments of Music*) with labeled depictions of musicians playing lute, harp,

trapezoidal zither, drums, flute, fiddle, and panpipes, as well as a detailed description of constructing an organ; see the miniatures reproduced in Shiloah 1979: 376–83. A list of other Arabic mss. with depictions of instruments is found on 444–5.

10 Page 2001: 148.

11 Lyres possess three "arms" and the strings are strung from the crossbar to the sound box, whereas harps have only two "arms" and are open on one side, with the strings strung between the two arms.

12 Given the early evidence of short-necked piriform lutes further east, such as in the Cave Temples of Dunhuang and in Gandhara, one can trace the history of this instrument type quite a bit further back in time, but the 'Arab lute' retained very specific characteristics over a number of centuries, hence the use of the term here.

13 For detailed descriptions of the construction of the medieval lute, see Farmer 1997: 223–33; Buterse 1979: 2–9; and Neubauer 1993.

14 Shiloah 1975; note his description of the two separate texts with the same title both attributed to al-Kindī (179–80).

15 Shiloah 1975: 183–4.

16 Although the medieval lute possessed frets, at some point in history these disappeared; the modern Middle Eastern lute is fretless. See Neubauer 1993 and Farmer 1939: 59–68 [rpt. 1997, II: 191–8].

17 This latter practice is still widespread among musicians in the modern Middle East to allow for octave "drop notes" for key pitches in the upper strings.

18 al-Fārābī, KMK, 498–628; French translation in D'Erlanger, *Musique arabe* [hereafter MA], I: 163–215.

19 al-Fārābī, KMK, 508–16; D'Erlanger, MA, I: 169–71.

20 Some musicians place the fret halfway between the index and third fingers, which is called the "Persian position" [*wusṭā al-furs*], and some place it halfway between the "Persian position" and the third finger, which is called the "Zalzal position." KMK, 510–11; MA, I: 170–1.

21 KMK, 516; MA, I: 174.

22 Ibn Ṭaḥḥān 1990.

23 See Farmer's abridged translation of this passage in 1939: 41–51 [rpt. 1997, Vol. II: 221–34]. The original Arabic text is available in facs. edition, Ibn Ṭaḥḥān 1990. For a solution to the problem of the unrealistic dimensions, see Buterse 1979.

24 Álvarez Martínez 1995: 98–9; see also Álvarez Martínez 1993: 201–18, and 1982; and Klein 1976.

25 For a complete history, see Bachmann 1969.

26 In the Hornbostel-Sachs classification system (1914), Curt Sachs and Erich von Hornbostel defined the lute as a string instrument with a sound box and a neck to which the strings are attached.

27 "Bowed lyres" are also found in the Hornbostel-Sachs classification, but they differ from "bowed lutes" in not having a neck, such as the Welsh *crwth* (English crowd or rote). For the survival of the name *lyra,* see Anoyanakis, 1979: 259–75.

28 Although the *rabāb* is mentioned in other 10th-century sources including the *Epistles of the Brethren of Purity,* trans. Wright 2010: 112, and the *Mafātīḥ al-'ulūm* of al-Khwarizmī (fl. 976–97), no descriptions are given. Al-Khwarizmī does note, however, that the *rabāb* was "well known to the people of Persia and Khorasan," see Farmer 1957–8: 3; [rpt. 1997: I, 455].

29 This diversity of different tunings is still found among *rabāb* players in the modern Middle East.

30 KMK 800–22; MA I, Book 2: 277–86.

31 For an argument debunking the idea that the oft-reproduced image in the Utrecht Psalter of 860 AD is a depiction of a bow, see Bachmann 1969: 20–1; the extremely long rod, *pace* Bachmann, demonstrates the "measuring" in the text: Psalm 108, Verse 7: "In triumph I will parcel out Shechem and measure off the Valley of Sukkoth."

32 Porras Robles 2009: 42–7.

33 Williams 1994–2002; Bachmann 1969; see also Williams 2017.

34 A color reproduction of this image (*Beatus*, Biblioteca Nacional, Madrid, Vitrina 14-1, fol. 130) is found in Reynolds 2009: 248.

35 Álvarez Martínez, however, argues that the unrealistic size of the instruments is a result of the artist's disregard for the laws of proportion, which may also be the case. See 1993: 214.

36 A color reproduction of this image (*Beatus*, Biblioteca de la Real Academia de la Historia, Madrid, Cod. 33, fol. 177) is found in Reynolds 2009: 249. For a list of other Iberian images from this same time period, see Bachmann 1969: 31.

37 Álvarez Martínez 1982 and 1993.

38 The *rabel* survives as a folk instrument in several regions of modern Spain, including the area between Palencia and Santander, where it is used to accompany a local type of folk song known as a *rabelada*. Numerous websites in Spain are devoted to the construction of the folk *rabel*, *rabelada* poetry, and *rabelada* festivals.

39 Catalan Psalter, c. 1050. ("King David and musicians tuning their instruments" in Bibliotheque Nationale, Paris, MS Lat. 11550, fol. 7v)

40 Gradual of Nevers c. 1060 ("Musician dancing, with legend Consonancia cuncta musica" from Bibliotheque Nationale, Paris, MS. lat. 9449, fol. 34v)

41 Fresco in the crypt of San Urbano alla Caffarella, near Rome, dated 1011.

42 German (Rhineland), bible codex c.1070 ("King David with musicians" in Graflich Schonbornsche Bibliothek, Pommersfelden, Cod. 2777, fol. I)

43 "Tiberius" Psalter, c.1050 ("Musician from King David's suite" in British Museum, London, Cotton MS.Tib.C.VI, fol. 30v).

44 Álvarez Martínez 1993: 214–15.

45 Bachmann 1966: 125; Hugo Steger, "At present we still know little from Byzantine sources about Byzantine musical instruments," qtd. in Braun 1980: 312.

46 Byzantine *lyra* (c. 1000), ivory casket, *Museo Nazionale Florence,* Coll. Carrand No. 26; see Goldschmidt and Weitzmann 1979: 87.

47 Braun 1980: 314; the reproductions of some of these images is rather clearer in Bachmann 1966: 125–46.

48 Braun 1980: 316.

49 A useful general survey is found in Fernández Manzano 1997: 101–36.

50 See Farmer 1997: II, 151–65, for a discussion of the purported author's name and the manuscript (Madrid, Res. 246). Shiloah (2003: 054, 97–8) however, has more recently uncovered an almost identical copy in the Rabat Bibliothèque Générale (D 3663) that bears the name Ibn al-Darrāj (Abū Muḥammad al-Anṣāri al-Sabtī), with minor variations in the list of instruments.

51 Two such texts have been translated into English by James Robson 1938. Dozens of as yet unedited manuscripts on this topic are listed and described in Shiloah 1979 & 2003.

52 See Farmer 1997: II, 151–65, for an attempt to identify these instruments through comparison with other sources.

53 Shiloah 2001: 1–30, especially 11–13.

54 For the *kurraj* (as it is usually spelled), see Ibn Khaldūn 1989: Vol II, 517; cf. Rosenthal's English translation, Ibn Khaldūn 1958: II, 404: "Other dancing equipment is used for a dance called *karaj*, which represents saddled horses and is made of wood. It is attached to wide robes of the type women wear, and the performers thus look like they are on horseback, attacking and retreating and jousting." See also the discussion of "Dance and Puppetry," Chapter 10.

55 Rote, or Rotta, sometimes referred to a type of hurdy-gurdy, but also to the English crowd, Welsh *crwth*, a bowed lyre.

56 Although the Spanish word guitar derives from the Arabic term, which itself is derived from the Greek *kithāra*, it is difficult to know exactly what instrument is indicated here.

57 See al-Maqqarī 1968: III: 213; al-Maqqarī 1855–61 [rpt. 1967] II: 143–4; in addition, there is a separate manuscript of the text in Tunisia, see Shiloah 1979: II, 106, 168–70.

58 The overall frame of this passage is a comparison with North Africa, which al-Shaqundī, as an Andalusi, finds inferior. This listing of Andalusi musical instruments is followed by a list of six North African instruments, several of which are equally obscure: *al-duff* (tambourine), *al-aqwāl* (?), *al-yarā* (flute), *abū qurūn* (perhaps the double-horned shawn known in Arabic as the *maqrūna* or *ghaiṭa*), the *dabdaba* of the *Sūdān* (Black Africans), and the *ḥamāqī* of the Berbers.

59 Ibn Saʿīd al-Andalusī 1964: 1, p. 177: *wa-lahu azjālun ʿalā tarīqati l-badāt allātī yughannūna bihā ʿalā l-būq*. The phrase *ʿalā tarīqat al-badāt* (lit. by way of a caprice or whim) led Julián Ribera y Tarragó to interpret this passage as follows: "The physician Yahya bin Abdu-l-lah Al-Bahdaba [sic] took a notion to compose very original *zejels* accompanied by wind instruments, like the horn, instead of by strings" (Ribera 1970: 137, note 67). However, it more likely that the phrase "by way of a whim" simply means that this physician composed *zajals* as a pastime, not that singing *zajals* to the *būq* was "highly original," for, as we have already seen, other sources demonstrate that singing to the accompaniment of the *būq* was widespread in al-Andalus.

60 This translation is based upon the glosses and manuscript variants cited in Juan Ruíz 1998 cross-referenced with the entries in Andrés 2001.

61 See García-Gómez 1956: 1–18.

62 It is not known if the term *galipe* here refers to a dance or a musical instrument.

63 Obscure; ms. variants include *hadura albardana* and *çítola albordana.*

64 The term *caño* is derived from the Arabic word *qānūn* (zither), originally from the Greek word canon, meaning "law" or "rule," but may possibly have been adapted directly from Byzantine Greek.

65 *Azófar* (also a*çófar*) comes from the Arabic for "brass" (*al-ṣufr*).

66 I do not include the *çinfonia* (symphonia, organistrum, hurdy-gurdy) as an instrument associated with Arab or Andalusian culture, though others have done so. See the discussion in Page 1982 [rpt. 1997].

67 Although there is no historical evidence that the baldosa was ever played in al-Andalus, the single most famous image from the *Cantigas de Santa María* (discussed below), portrays a "Moor" and a Christian performing a duet on the baldosa while the Christian sings. Is this an indication that Andalusi musicians in the north played on instruments not found in al-Andalus, or is this perhaps simply a fantasy image created for artistic purposes?

68 Blecua hypothesizes that this obscure phrase means "they do not love *the benediction of Allah*," possibly a garbled version of the phrase *bism illāh* (in the name of God); see Ruíz 1990: 390, note 1516c.

69 Additional lists in literary sources that include "Arab" instruments are studied in Godwin 1977 [rpt. 2009: 38–52].

70 It should be noted that even eastern Arabic sources such as KA are in general silent about these "secondary instruments."

71 Molina 2010.

72 Ibid., 18.

73 Ibid., 31–51.

74 Ibid., 87–9.

75 Ibid., chapters 4–6.

7 Music theory and performance practices

Another domain in which a certain amount of "mutual intelligibility" reigned in the medieval Mediterranean is that of music theory. Both Islamic and Western Christian cultures were heir to ancient Greek teachings and writings on music theory, particularly those of Pythagoras (ca. 570–ca. 495 BCE), Nicomachus (ca. 60–ca. 120 CE), and Ptolemy (ca. 100–ca.170 CE). Their ideas were transmitted, expanded, and modified to various degrees by authors such as Boethius (ca. 480–524 CE), Isidore of Seville (ca. 560–636), the anonymous authors of the Arabic *Epistles of the Brethen of Purity* (8th or 10th century), the Arab philosopher al-Kindī (ca. 801–73), and the Persian philosopher al-Fārābī (ca. 870–950/1).[1] It is not my intention here to rehearse a detailed history of the development of medieval music theory East and West, but rather to demonstrate that these writers shared a number of broad-based ideas and principles. They were all, for example, to some degree, "Pythagoreans," meaning that they understood music theory (in contrast to the art of performing music) primarily as a form of mathematics and believed that intervals could be expressed as arithmetic ratios. Similarly, they all believed in the concept of the "music of the spheres" (i.e., of the heavenly bodies) and shared the understanding that music was therefore critical to comprehending the very structure of the cosmos. In addition, they understood music to function within a system of "modes" and believed that specific musical modes had specific concrete and observable effects on human emotions, and these effects could be used in treating mental and physical illnesses.[2] In contrast, this period also witnessed the emergence in the West of a musical practice that would develop dramatically in later centuries, but would not be shared by Middle Eastern traditions, namely, polyphony.

Music as mathematics

One of the most distinctive characteristics of ancient Greek music theory was the idea that musical intervals could be expressed in mathematical ratios. Although no texts attributed directly to Pythagoras have survived (and none may ever had existed), the ideas and discoveries attributed to him have come down to us through later writers. The basic principles of the Pythagorean system are easily demonstrated. If one takes a string and stops it in the exact center, creating two equal segments, each of those segments when plucked makes a sound one octave higher than the open string, hence the ratio of the octave is 2:1. If one divides the string into three equal segments and stops it at two-thirds its length, plucking the longer of the two segments produces a sound a fifth higher than the open string (that is, five notes, for example, c to g), and its ratio is 3:2. If one divides the string into four parts and stops it at three-quarters of its length, plucking the longer segment produces a note that is a fourth higher (i.e., c to f), with a ratio of 4:3. These three intervals – the octave, fourth and fifth – are almost universally perceived as consonant (that is, "pleasing," the opposite of dissonant) and are commonly referred to as "perfect" intervals (e.g., a "perfect fourth" and a "perfect fifth").

This system of conceiving musical intervals and determining consonant sounds by mathematical processes (and the larger idea that the structure of the cosmos could be described mathematically) did not, however, find universal acceptance, and was most famously opposed by Aristoxenus (4th c. BCE), himself the son of a musician and one of Aristotle's most prominent students. He argued instead that consonance could and should be understood through human perception: "Through hearing we assess the magnitudes of intervals, and through reason we apprehend their functions."[3] This non-arithmetic approach to determining intervals and consonance, however, did not find many later advocates in Europe or the Arabo-Islamic world.[4] The Pythagorean concept of intervals expressed through mathematics prevailed among medieval theorists, along with the underlying conviction that these mathematical–musical relations were deeply connected to the very tissue of the cosmos. "Once it took root in the philosophy of Plato, the Pythagorean conception of the universe as a musical-numerical system rapidly became the standard throughout the Mediterranean world."[5]

Claudius Ptolemy (2nd c. CE), accepted the Pythagorean principle of expressing intervals as ratios to a degree, but argued that the purely mathematical approach had to be tempered with empirical methods:

> Like [the Pythagoreans], he tied his quantification of harmonic relations to an account of the physical basis of sound and pitch. He expresses intervals between notes as ratios of numbers […] More fundamentally, he holds that the principles of harmonic order are mathematical: their nature and credentials are to be discerned by reason. Though reason's findings must then be checked against perceptual experience …[6]

From a modern point of view, it would be easy to underestimate the unique, and all-pervasive, "Pythagorean" foundation of Western and Arabo-Islamic music theory, but it was a framework that bound together nearly all writers on music theory in the Mediterranean Middle Ages.

The music of the spheres

The arithmetic simplicity of determining the basic intervals seemed to the Pythagoreans to be an indication that mathematic principles were at work in the very structure of the cosmos. Indeed, the ancient Greek word for "ratio" is *logos*, which also means word, thought, and reason, and this fact further strengthened this perception.[7] Aristotle's account of Pythagorean thought in the *Metaphysics* describes this as follows:

> they [the Pythagoreans] say that the attributes and ratios of musical scales were expressible in numbers; since, then, all other things seemed in their whole nature to be modelled after numbers, and numbers seemed to be the first things in the whole of nature, they supposed the elements of numbers to be the elements of all things, and the whole heaven to be a musical scale and number.[8]

To distinguish between the various types of music in the cosmos, Pythagoras divided music into three categories: *musica instrumentalis* (music produced, for example, on a musical instrument), *musica humana* (the musical resonance between the body and the soul), and *musica mundana* (the music of the cosmos). Given the size of the heavenly bodies, their number, and their motion, Pythagoreans argued that they must therefore create vibrations, thereby producing sounds. According to Aristotle's *On the Heavens,* "Starting from this argument, and the observation that their speeds, as measured by their distances, are in the same ratios as musical concordances, they assert that the sound given forth by the circular movement of the stars is a harmony."[9] The question of whether or not humans could perceive this "music of the spheres," however, was debated for centuries.[10]

Melodic modes

Musical systems around the medieval Mediterranean were *modal.*[11] A musical mode is essentially a scale with particular characteristics, and these scales are often associated with different emotions or moods within their own musical culture. Modern western musical traditions, for example, are composed almost entirely in two contrasting modes, *major* and *minor*. Major keys are usually perceived as brighter and happier than minor keys, which are felt to be sadder or darker. Some European folk traditions, however, use modes other than major and minor, and "modal" compositions have been incorporated into jazz by musicians such as Miles Davis and Bill Evans and into popular music by the Beatles and others.[12]

Many of the musical traditions of the medieval Mediterranean had a basic system consisting of eight modes, from which additional modes were sometimes derived.[13] In Chapter 2, for example, we saw that 7th-century musicians such Ibn Muḥriz and Ibn Misjaḥ were said to have traveled from the Arabian

Peninsula to Byzantium and studied the "eight modes" [*octoechoi*] of Byzantine music. Al-Kindī, in his 9th-century treatise on the lute, remarks that just as peoples of different regions have different customs and traditions, they also have different musical systems, including different musical modes. He concludes this passage by stating that all modal systems ultimately derive from the eight Greek/Byzantine modes:

> The Byzantines have a system, which is of eight modes (*al-usṭukhūsiyya* = "octoechos") and whatever they perform, whether it be a song or anything else, is in one of those modes. This is the same with the system of the Arabs – which alternates among rhythms appropriate to their songs – and their eight rhythmic modes, by which I mean, "heavy" (*thaqīl*), "light" (*khafīf*), *hazaj,* and the others, are part of everything they sing.[14] Similarly, the Sogdians possess a musical system related to their language and their melodies. This is also the case with the Turks, the Daylamites, the Khazar, and all other languages. However, all of these musical systems of all peoples are derived from the eight Byzantine modes that we have already mentioned. There are scarcely any consonant sounds (*masmūʿāt*) that are not from these eight modes.[15]

Al-Kindī was much more of a philosopher than a musician, and his view that the Byzantine modes were the source of all other modes may derive from his study of Greek writings on music theory.

If we turn to the 10th-century *Kitāb al-Aghānī*, the terminology used to indicate the melodic modes is attributed to the singer-scholar Isḥāq al-Mawṣilī and is sometimes called the system of "finger modes" because it is based on the placement of the fingers on the strings of the lute.[16] Al-Iṣbahānī notes in his introduction to KA that he converted the names of all of the rhythms and modes he encountered in his various sources to the system of Isḥāq. Unfortunately, we therefore have very little knowledge of how musicians referred to the melodic modes in Arabic previous to Isḥāq's terminological innovations in the 9th century. A passage from an anonymous English translation dating to the 18th or 19th century from an Arabic text (now lost) contains a quotation attributed to Yūnus the Secretary (mid-8th century) saying that "The people of the country use other notes, like the people of old" and "Sometimes they call the 'fingers' by Arabian and Persian names."[17] This may be a reference to an earlier tonal and modal system.[18] In the wake of al-Iṣbahāni's "regularization" of the modal nomenclature according to the system of Isḥāq al-Mawṣilī in the 10th century, we are left with almost no knowledge of the earlier Arabic terminology for the modes that can be compared to the terminology found in Andalusian and other later sources.[19]

Although the loss of the earlier Arabic names for modes is frustrating, one can still appreciate the genius behind al-Mawṣilī's system, for it spelled out to musicians in practical terms which notes were to be played.[20] In contrast, modes referred to solely by name give no practical information unless we have an accompanying description that allows us to determine which notes constituted a given mode at that time and place and which melodic features characterized specific modes.[21]

The effect of modes

The musical modes were understood to be manifestations of the mathematical structure of music and the cosmos, and thus quite logically were thought to resonate with and affect the emotions of human listeners. The idea that specific modes produced specific psychological moods was already present in some of the earliest ancient Greek writings on music. Damon, a contemporary of Socrates and Pericles, argued that "the various different modes and rhythms used in Greek music were intimately connected with different ethical qualities" and that therefore the state should maintain control of the music used in education and that boys should be taught "such melodies as were characterized by manliness, restraint, and even-handedness."[22] Although Damon approved of six modes, Plato, who echoed Damon's ideas, approved of only two: the Dorian and Phrygian.[23] Socrates was also concerned about which musical modes should be used and warned that the Mixolydian and Hyper-Lydian modes were "dirgelike and ought to be done away with, for they are useless 'even to women.' "[24]

The 10th-century Arab "Brethren of Purity" listed several such effects of musical modes, stating that one melody type softens hearts, causes one to weep, instills remorse for past sins and helps cleans the conscience. Another type emboldens soldiers in battle, yet another alleviates pains and illnesses of patients in hospitals, one offers solace in times of affliction and sadness, one is used during heavy work to bring relief for physical exhaustion and weariness of the soul, and another provokes rejoicing, delight and pleasure.[25]

These effects of music were used in the treatment of both psychological and physical ailments.[26] In one anecdote about Pythagoras, a young man had been listening to music in the Phrygian mode, which incites anger and violence. When he spied his girlfriend sneaking out of another man's home at dawn he resolved to burn her house down. By chance, Pythagoras was passing by, saw the young man's rage, and asked a piper to play a more calming tune, at which time the young man's indignation dissipated and tragedy was averted. This same young man had apparently insulted Pythagoras only hours before, but now spoke to him respectfully, before heading home.[27] This and other similar anecdotes were repeated by Boethius and were thus incorporated into Western writings on music theory from a very early date.

A very similar tale is told of al-Kindī who was treated badly by a certain wealthy merchant. The man's son later fell ill and the father was frantic, not only out of concern for the young man's health, but also because his son had kept many of the family accounts in his head. After trying every physician available, he finally sent for al-Kindī. The great scholar diagnosed the young man's illness, summoned four of his music students, and ordered them to play their lutes close to the patient's head. He gave them careful instructions on what to play and the young man soon regained consciousness and began to dictate to his father the needed information. At one point, however, the musicians strayed from the directions they had been given, and the patient lost consciousness and died.[28]

In summary, music theorists such as Boethius, Isidore of Seville, the anonymous authors of the Arabic *Epistles of the Brethen of Purity*, al-Kindī, and al-Fārābī, may have disagreed on matters of detail, but they also shared a number of key concepts and a general framework of ideas. They were all essentially "Pythagorean" in their approach to determining intervals, although they grappled, as Ptolemy had done, with the question of whether consonance could be determined *purely* through mathematics. Put another way, if they had all sat down to dine together, they could have argued all night about calculating the correct ratio for tuning thirds, whether it was better to demonstrate musical principles on the Greek lyre (as Boethius did) or on the Arab lute, whether humans could perceive the music of the spheres, which melodic modes were useful in treating various ailments, and so forth. In the end, however, none of them would have brought to the discussion a major principle that was utterly unfamiliar to the others.

If, however, the anonymous author of the 9th-century *Musica Enchiriades* or Guido of Arezzo (992–after 1033) were added to the guest list, they would have brought with them knowledge of a musical practice that was emerging in Christian religious worship that would have been unfamiliar to the other guests: polyphony (referred to as *diaphonia* or *organum*). In its earliest form this was an extemporaneous performance practice in which a second voice was added to enrich and support a monophonic chant using only those intervals that were considered entirely "consonant" – octaves, fifths, fourth, and unisons – and in which the second voice moved in parallel and rhythmically in step with the main melody. Over time this second voice became more and more independent, included separate ornamentation, moving sometimes in the same direction and sometimes in a divergent manner from the main melody, and including additional intervals. By the 13th century, with the emergence of the secular multi-voiced motet, Europe had decisively started down a new path that led away from the shared, predominantly monophonic world of the medieval Mediterranean.[29]

Music theory in al-Andalus

There are few surviving texts on music theory from al-Andalus, though if we expand the parameters of our search to include Maghribi texts that have strong links to Andalusi music, the corpus is somewhat larger. We might first ask to what degree theoretical ideas from the Mashriq circulated in al-Andalus and then ask about the emergence of the distinctively Andalusi/Maghribi modal system.

Perhaps the earliest mention of a book on music theory in al-Andalus appears in the biographical notice of the great Andalusi poet ʿAbbās ibn Nāṣiḥ (d. ca. 852) in Ibn Ḥāyyān's *al-Muqtabis.*[30] His father was an Amazigh (Berber) slave who was purchased and then freed, by a female member of an important Arab family in Algeciras, who later married him. Ibn Nāṣiḥ himself eventually became a member of the court of al-Ḥakam I, the best-known poet of his age, and the emir's favorite panegyrist. As a youth, he traveled to the East where he was educated, and returned to al-Andalus well versed in astronomy/astrology, mathematics, medicine, philosophy, and music. In a passage listing books that Ibn Nāṣiḥ purchased from the East appear titles such as *Kitāb al-Zīj* [*Book of Astronomical Tables*], *al-Qānūn* [*The Canon*]*, al-Sind Hind* [*Book of Sind and India*], *al-Arkund* [?], and *al-Mūsīqā* [*Book of Music*], along with other books on philosophy, wisdom, and medicine from among the books of the "Ancients" [*al-awāʾil*].[31] If *al-Mūsīqā* is a reference to a book in Arabic, then it could be one of al-Kindī's treatises on music, but in the early 9th century, this might also have been a book in Greek or a translation from Greek to Arabic, since works attributed to Pythagoras, Plato, Aristotle, Aristoxenus, Euclid, Nicomachus, and Ptolemy are all mentioned in medieval sources as having been translated into Arabic.[32]

The ideas of the great music theorists, however, were not always transmitted through copies of their own works, and instead were often disseminated through various forms of abridgments and summaries. Umayya ibn Abī Salṭ al-Dānī (ca. 1068–1134) was born in the southeastern Iberian coastal town of Denia, but spent most of his life in Cairo and Tunisia. He was, like so many other scholars of his era, a polymath and wrote on medicine, pharmacology, philosophy, astronomy, as well as music. Although commonly cited as a scholar of music theory, none of his writings on that topic has been preserved in the original Arabic. Some scholars have identified a manuscript in the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris as a Hebrew translation of one of his works, but this remains disputed; neither the name of the translator nor that of the patron who commissioned the translation are included in the manuscript.[33] With some modifications, the treatise reproduces materials from both Aristotle and al-Fārābī's *Great Book on Music* [KMK]. Avenary dates the manuscript to the early 12th century and proposes that it was copied in Provence, "where Lewi ben Gershom (Gersonides, Leo Hebraeus) wrote in 1342 his book 'De numeris harmonicis' for Philipp de Vitry, bishop of Meaux, and author of the famous musical treatise *Ars Nova.*"[34]

The Hebrew treatise also bears a close resemblance to an unedited Arabic text by Abū Jaʿfar Aḥmad ibn Munʿim al-ʿAbdarī al-Balansī "the Valencian" (13th century?), *Masāʾil uṣūl al-mūsīqī* (*Issues in the Fundamentals of Music Theory*), which is similarly a reworking of al-Fārābī's KMK. As Shiloah rightly remarks:

> Although al-ʿAbdarī's compendium contains nothing original, it is of great importance because of: 1) the choice of the most authoritative Arabic

> work on the science of music; 2) the reasons that led two Andalusian scholars [al-ʻAbdarī and Ibn Abī l-Salṭ] to provide an abridged or condensed version of it; and, 3) the opportunity [offered] by both cases to observe aspects of the approach and technique used in condensing such as prestigious work.[35]

In other words, whether or not the Hebrew treatise cited above is a translation of a work of Ibn Abī l-Salṭ al-Dānī, both it and al-ʻAbdarī's work provide testimony to the circulation of al-Fārābī's ideas in forms other than copies of his original work.

In addition to various abridged and reworked Arabic versions of the most important treatises on music theory, the ideas of al-Kindī, al-Fārābī, the Brethren of Purity and Ibn Sīnā' also circulated in Hebrew translations and as citations in the Arabic and Hebrews works of Iberian Jewish scholars such as Moshe Ben Ezra (b. 1055–60, d. after 1138), Ibn ʻAqnīn (1150–1220), and Shem Tov ben Yosef ibn Falaqera (1225–95).[36]

The most important Andalusi scholar of music theory was Ibn Bājja (ca. 1085–1139), known to the Latins as Avempace. Born in Zaragoza, in northeastern Iberia, Ibn Bājja was a remarkable polymath who wrote on topics in philosophy (including a commentary on Aristotle), metaphysics, science, astronomy, and music theory, as well as being a poet and composer of *muwashshaḥ* songs. Aḥmad al-Tīfāshī states that Ibn Bājja devoted himself for a period of two years to revising Andalusi musical practice and combined the music of the Christians with the songs of the East, creating a new style found only in al-Andalus, which could possibly be a reference to the creation of the *muwashshaḥ/zajal* song genre (see Chapter 10).[37] Unfortunately, a short text of two pages is the only surviving work of Ibn Bājja's to deal with music theory.[38]

Shiloah's description of the contents of the manuscript shows that this brief text, possibly a fragment from a larger work, is almost exclusively focused on a combination of the philosophy and physics of sound. The topics dealt with include the theory of audition, the production of sound, its transmission and perception by the ear, the nature of bodies that produce sounds, the vibrations of the strings of the lute, the difference between sound (*ṣawt*) and musical note (*naghma*), the human voice, the correspondence between the proportions of celestial and earthly music, the natural elements, humors, etc. which are claimed to be connected to the string of the lute. He argues that music should correspond to various feelings in order to be capable of stirring the same feelings in the soul of the listener, discusses the affective properties of the four strings, and states that the voice is produced on four levels which correspond to the four strings: chest = *bamm*, larynx = *mathlath*, forehead = *mathnā*, head = *zīr*.[39]

The abovementioned texts all show very close affinities to music theory as it was developed in Arabic texts in the Mashriq. The most important source for modal practice in al-Andalus, however, is found in the work of the

13th-century Tunisian author, al-Tīfāshī, *Faṣl al-khiṭāb fī madārik al-ḥawāss al-khams li-ūlī l-albāb* [*The Final Say on the Perception of the Five Senses for Those of Discernment*].[40] In the two sections that have been edited by al-Ṭanjī and translated by Liu and Monroe, the author describes two repertories of songs. In Chapter 10, he lists 56 songs by their opening verse (i.e., incipit) which he appears to consider the "classical repertory" or songs in the classical style, most of which are settings of lyrics by ancient, Umayyad and Abbasid poets, with a handful of Andalusi poets.[41] In Chapter 11, he then presents what he terms the *qawānīn* (rules, foundations) of Andalusi music (*ghinā' al-Andalus*), with each song attributed to its composer (*mulaḥḥin*). The Andalusi songs are grouped into four melodic modes: *khusruwānī*, *mazmūm*, *muṭlaq*, and *mujannab*.[42]

There are several references to this or similar modal systems in other medieval texts.[43] First, there is a partial correspondence with the system of four primary modes enumerated in the 11th-century treatise, *Kamāl adab al-ghinā'* [*The Perfection of the Knowledge of Music*] by al-Ḥasan ibn ʿAlī al-Kātib, which appears to have been composed in Syria.[44] Al-Kātib says that people use many different names for modes, but that the majority of songs are in only four modes: *muṭlaq*, *mazmūm*, *maḥmūl*, and *maḥṣūr*, each of which is associated with one of the four fingers. The *muṭlaq* ("open") is associated with the little finger (because when tuned in fourths, the little finger on one string is the same pitch as the "open string" above it), *mazmūm* with the index finger, *maḥmūl* with the middle finger, and *maḥṣūr* with the ring finger. He also notes that some people refer to *maḥmūl* with a flat third as *maḥmūl awwal* [first *maḥmūl*] and call it *maḥmūl thānī* [second *maḥmūl*] if the neutral ("zalzal") third is used. Thus, two of the mode names are shared with al-Tīfāshī's description (*muṭlaq* and *mazmūm*), and both writers use a system of four basic modes.

There are additional echoes of these mode names in the writings of Ṣafī l-Dīn al-Urmawī (1216–94) and ʿAbd al-Qādir al-Ghaybī al-Marāghī (d. 1435), where they appear, however, to be regarded as antiquated [*qadīm*] and/or marginal.[45] The latter cites them as part of a six-mode system (*muṭlaq*, *mazmūm*, *musarraj*, *muʿallaq*, *maḥmūl*, and *mujannab*), whereas al-Urmawī labels his two of his notated examples as being in the *mujannab* and *muṭlaq* modes respectively, though neither of these terms occurs in his list of mode names.

In a passage where al-Tīfāshī discusses various tunings for the lute among the Andalusians, he associates the modes not with the four fingers as did al-Ḥasan al-Kātib, but rather with five different tunings for the lowest string of the lute, echoing al-Kindī's observation about the various tunings of the lute (see Chapter 6). On a four-string lute, the names of the strings are (from lowest to highest in pitch): *bamm*, *mathlath*, *mathnā*, and *zīr*. Al-Tīfāshī gives the tuning for a five-string lute referring to the highest string simply as "the fifth string," which in other sources is usually called the *zīr ḥādd* (the high-pitched *zīr*). The tuning process begins with the singer/musician setting the *mathnā* (the second-highest string on a four-string lute, or the middle string of a five-string lute) to a desired pitch, which, for purposes of demonstration, will here be labeled g (i.e., consistent with the most common modern tuning), and proceeds to tuning the upper four strings in fourths [a – d – g – c], after which he discusses various different tunings for the lowest string, the *bamm*:[46]

> If they tune the bamm to the pitch of the first finger on the *mathnā* [= e natural], they call it *mazmūm*. If they tune the bamm to the same pitch as the *zīr* [= g], they call it "*mazmūm* on the *zīr* pitch" (*mazmūm'alā l-zīr*). If they tune the bamm to the pitch of the third finger on the mathlath [= c$^{\#}$], they call it *al-khusruwānī*, if they tune it to the pitch of the open *mathnā* [= d], they call it *muṭlaq*, and if they tune it to the second finger [mujannab] on the *mathnā* [= f], they call it mujannab.[47]

Thus, using d as our starting pitch, the four upper strings remain the same, and the only difference is the pitch of the lowest string (*bamm*):

E – a – d – g – c' = *mazmūm*
G – a – d – g – c' = *mazmūm 'alā l-zīr*
C♯ – a – d – g – c' = *khusruwāni*
D – a – d – g – c' = *muṭlaq*
F – a – d – g – c' = *mujannab*

Although he presents five different tunings, he does not give any examples of songs in the *mazmūm 'alā l-zīr* mode/tuning. The logic behind the different tunings of the lowest string is so that it is one octave below the tonic or main note of the mode and can be used to play "drop notes" that reinforce the sense of the tonic or main note as the primary tone. It is rather simple, therefore, to see how the mode and the tuning for the *bamm* came to be referred to by the same term.

This approach is in fact not unique, for it is also found in a fragment from the Geniza collection written in Judeo-Arabic analyzed by H. Avenary.[48] This short text uses two of the mode names cited by al-Tīfāshī (*muṭlaq* and *mazmūm*), and a third name (*maḥmūl*) that is found in al-Ḥasan al-Kātib and al-Marāghī. It offers instructions for tuning the *bamm* to the appropriate pitch, i.e., the tonic of the mode, and then describes a basic melodic contour that is typical of that mode, similar to the examples notated by Ṣafī al-Dīn al-Urmawī, referred to by some medieval writers as a *ṭarīqa* (pl. *ṭarā'iq*).[49] One unusual feature of this text is that the description on how to play the *ṭarīqa* includes indications of when to play a note with a downward stroke of the plectrum and when to use an upward stroke. The four-mode system that al-Tīfāshī records is thus one that was at least partially shared with the Eastern Mediterranean, but appears to have overlapped historically, or existed side by side, with a far more elaborate system of modal nomenclature that has remained in use until the present day in North Africa, though exactly when this distinctive terminology emerged is difficult to determine.

H. G. Farmer published four short texts under the title *An Old Moorish Lute Tutor* that provide some insight into the early stages of the modern Andalusi–Maghribi modal system.[50] The first manuscript was acquired in Tetuan, Morocco, and is both anonymous and undated; Farmer hypothesizes that this is a late copy (probably 16th century) of an earlier work. Among the most interesting features of the text are its use of the Maghribi terms for the lute strings (*dīl, māya, ramal, ḥusayn*) and the listing of 24 modes with Maghribi names. In addition, its theoretical discussions are based on a single octave, which, Farmer argues, predates the two-octave system found in al-Kindī, al-Fārābī, and elsewhere. Moreover, the four strings of the lute are not tuned in fourths, but with a single whole step between the 1st and 2nd and again between the 3rd and 4th strings (c d g a'), a tuning that survives in modern North African practice for instruments such as the Algerian *kwītra.*

The second and fourth texts discussed by Farmer are versified listings of the four natures (black bile, phlegm, blood, and yellow bile) and the four elements to which they are connected (earth, water, air, fire), followed by a listing of 22 modes with Maghribi names, though with some differences. The third text is a short fragment, scarcely a paragraph in length, giving the names of 24 Maghribi modes, which also mentions the idea that there are 366 modes found among the various peoples of the world.[51] The versified lists of Maghribi modes are found with many different variants in later centuries, a number of which are accompanied by the image of a tree that shows the relationship between the "source" modes (*uṣūl*) versus "branch" (*furūʿ*) modes. This image, however, appears to be a post-Iberian development that emerged in North Africa, and it is unclear whether these mode names were ever in use in al-Andalus.[52]

The modern Maghribi names for the modes may be related to more ancient names that were, as we have seen, replaced by Isḥāq al-Mawṣilī's system of "finger modes." If that were the case, then they would have arrived in al-Andalus with the earliest musicians and would constitute a continuation of the older Arab modal system. This is an idea frequently embraced by modern musicians of Andalusi music traditions in North Africa. This argument is supported by the example of the term *mazmūm*, which appears to have been one of the ancient mode names that al-Iṣbahānī replaced with the new Mawṣilian terminology in all of the song captions of KA, but which occasionally pops up in anecdotes that he either chose or failed to replace.[53] It is linked to the pitch of the first finger (*sabbāba*) on the *mathnā* string. In Ibn Faḍl Allāh's *Masālik*, several songs by the *qiyān* of al-Ḥakam I are said to have been composed in *mazmūm* in the 8th century.[54]

The name *mazmūm* is attested in al-Tīfāshī, al-Ḥasan al-Kātib, the Geniza fragments, al-Marāghī, and all three of the medieval lists of Andalusi modes studied by Farmer. It also survives as the name of a mode across North Africa in the modern Moroccan, Algerian, Tunisian, and Libyan traditions of Andalusi music; however, according to Guettat, these modes are different from one region to another and share only their name.[55] *Mujannab* is not found in the medieval lists, but is found in a compound form in some modern traditions as *mujannab al-dhīl* in Morocco, *dhīl wa-mujannabāt* in Tunisia, and *mjanba* in Algeria, but again, the notes of these modes are completely different from one another. The term *muṭlaq* ("open string") and the name *al-khusruwānī* do not seem to be found in either the medieval Maghribi lists or in any of the modern traditions.

In sum, in the written tradition of the Mashriq, Isḥāq al-Mawṣilī's system of eight "finger modes" displaced the older Arab names, although these appear to have continued in use in oral tradition among musicians, and they reappear from time to time in later writings. It is probable that it is this older nomenclature that was in use in al-Andalus, partially preserved in al-Tīfāshī, for there is no evidence that the Mawṣilī system of "finger modes" ever took hold there, despite the presence of al-Iṣbahānī's *Book of Songs*. At some point in time, in both the Mashriq and the Maghrib, new systems encompassing many more modes began to develop. In the Maghrib the growth in the number of modes, at least in the traditions that are referred to as "Andalusian," stopped at 24 modes (with occasional references to slightly more). In the Mashriq, in part through interaction with Persian and Turkish traditions, that number continued to increase, until, in the early 19th century, Mikhā'īl Mashāqa would write of 95 modes that were known and in current practice in the region of Lebanon/Syria.[56]

Rhythm

One of the most innovative aspects of music theory in the medieval Arabo-Islamic world, as Neubauer has noted, is found in the systematic analysis of rhythm.[57] Although no treatises of Andalusi origin have come to light that contain original contributions to this field, one remarkable text demonstrates that the rhythms documented in the *Kitāb al-Aghānī* and other texts from the Mashriq were well known among Andalusians. ʿAbd Allāh Ibn al-Ṣīd al-Baṭalyawsī ["of Badajoz"] (1052–1127) was a prolific philologist who wrote about language, grammar, poetry, theology, and other topics.[58] One of his works is a commentary on a collection of poems by the blind Syrian poet Abū al-ʿAlā' al-Maʿarrī (d. 1057) titled *Saqṭ al-Zand* [*The Spark of the Fire-stick*]. In his explanation of a verse in that refers to the "first heavy" rhythm, al-Baṭalyawsī summarizes the eight canonical rhythms, demonstrating a remarkable familiarity with theoretical writings, particularly the ideas of Isḥāq al-Mawṣilī, but also of other theorists.[59] The significance of this passage however, also lies in al-Baṭalyawsī's statement that he is presenting the rhythms "the way they are customarily used among our contemporaries," offering evidence that rhythmic practices from earlier centuries in the East were still in use in al-Andalus as late as the 12th century.[60] Since none of al-Baṭalyawsī's other writings deals specifically with music, we might also surmise from this passage that such knowledge of music may well have been common among Andalusi intellectuals of his era.

Performance practices

Finally, secular musical traditions in the medieval Mediterranean also shared a number of characteristics in terms of performance practices, beginning with the primacy of the human voice. Although there were several forms of purely instrumental ensembles, such as trumpet and drum groupings used for military purposes or in public events to add pomp and magnitude to the arrival and departure of powerful figures, in most courtly or art music, instruments served primarily to accompany singers in relatively small ensembles. In many cases, it is unclear to what degree purely instrumental compositions even existed. Instrumentalists accompanying singers certainly performed on their own before, within, and after songs. To what degree, however, was the material they played dependent upon the song, how much was pure improvisation, and did instrumentalists possess repertories of pre-composed instrumental pieces that they could teach to other musicians or pass on to their students? Even a source as rich as the great *Kitāb al-Aghānī* leaves these and many other questions about instrumental music unanswered.[61]

Al-Fārābī is a particularly rich source here since he was one of the few theorists who also dealt with the practical details of musical performance. He deems the human voice clearly superior to instruments, since it produces words that have meaning. He notes that instruments may accompany the melody sung by the singer by following it closely or at times adding ornamentation, but also mentions that instruments play "introductions" (*iftitāḥāt*) and "intermezzos" (*maqāṭi' wa-istirāḥāt*), probably meaning both between phrases within a song and between songs.[62] On the one hand, he ranks instruments in terms of their ability to accompany singing in three categories: 1) the lute; 2) the various forms of *ṭunbūr*; and, 3) the other instruments. However, in another passage, he evaluates musical instruments by how well they can imitate the human voice, the best of which is the *rabāb*, followed by the wind instruments (*mazāmīr*), and then the lutes and other open-string instruments (*ma'āzif*) such as zithers, harps and lyres, and finally the rest.[63]

For most regions of the Mediterranean, it remains an open question as to when and how a purposefully composed instrumental repertory completely independent of vocal singing first emerged. Certainly, there existed fanfares and drum music that performed public functions, and dance tunes might have been well known (though these equally well might have been song tunes performed instrumentally). But references to instrumental music performed solo, in duets, or larger groupings, are relatively rare in comparison with the accounts of sung performances.

Another shared characteristic was that throughout much of the Middle Ages music around the Mediterranean was primarily monophonic (with all voices/instruments performing the same melody) or heterophonic (with all voices/instruments performing the same melody but with a certain amount of individual interpretation and ornamentation). Male and female voices are often naturally pitched an octave apart, so singing in octaves would almost certainly have been common. There may also have been a sort of "early" *organum*, sung in parallel fourths or fifths. But true polyphony, that is, multiple voices singing completely independent melodic lines, does not seem to be found in secular music until the emergence of the multiple-voiced motets of the 13th century. The claim has been made that *organum* was taught in Cordoba in the 11th century, but the source for this is problematic. The passage in question is from a work titled *Philosophia* attributed to one Virgilius Cordubensis and reads: "Seven masters taught grammar every day at Cordoba, five taught logic, three natural science, two astrology, one geometry, three physics, and two masters taught music *that art which is called organum* …" The phrase in italics (*de ista arte quae dicitur organum*), however, is a gloss by the scribe who did the Latin translation in 1290, and appears not to have been in the original text; moreover, it is not clear if this passage refers to a Muslim or a Christian institution.[64]

In addition, most secular musical performances in this time period consisted of small groupings of musicians and singers. Thibaut classifies medieval Byzantine musical ensembles into two categories "military" and "dionysian" (which Bachmann amends to "military" and "concert").[65] The non-military ensembles appear to have been small, usually of no more than a half dozen musicians. On the Arabo-Islamic side, courtly performances consisted, except on extraordinary occasions, of very small groups of musicians, typically a singer and lute player (*'ūd* or *ṭunbūr*), at times with a percussionist (*daff* or *ṭabla*), and in a few documented cases, a wind instrument, usually the reed flute (*nāy*), as well.[66] Scenes such as the one cited in Chapter 2, where Jamīla's students all played their lutes in unison, are cited precisely because they were highly unusual, and in that case, they performed the melody of a song that Jamīla had already sung *a cappella* and then performed again accompanying herself on the lute, rather than an instrumental composition.[67] Another well-known example from KA is a scene where Ibn Jāmi' visits Ibrāhīm al-Mawṣilī, who brought out 30 singing slave girls and had them play in unison. Ibn Jāmi' pointed out that one string on one lute was out of tune, at which point Ibrāhīm called out to one of the musicians and told her to tighten the second string of her instrument, after which all went well.[68]

It was also somewhat uncommon to group wind instruments and string instruments together. This was in part a purely logistical matter, since the string instruments of the period would have had a hard time being heard over the much louder woodwind and brass instruments. By the later Middle Ages, this division came to be referred to as "*altos y bajos*" in Spanish and "*hauts et bas*" in French, referring to the loud versus soft instruments. As E. Bowles notes, "It may seem strange to the concert-goer of today, who sees the orchestra conveniently displayed in four so-called family sections, to envisage an entirely different system of grouping musical instruments. Such was the case, however, during the later Middle Ages."[69] Drawing exclusively on European sources, Bowles divides the two groups as follows:

> The loud category included the bombard (bass shawm), buisine (clarion), chalumeau (reed pipe), cornamuse (bagpipe), cymbals, drums, horns and trumpets. The soft instruments comprised the cithara, douçaine (cromorne), flageolet (recorder), flute, guitar, hurdy-gurdy, lute, trumscheit (monochord), panpipes, psaltery, rebec, rote (crwth), and vielle.[70]

In their study of different late medieval ensembles (ca. 1300–ca.1520), Brown and Polk offer the categories of trumpet bands, loud wind bands (shawm bands), soft instruments, and ensembles of instruments and of voices.[71] It is the soft instruments, predominantly strings, that are most clearly identified with courtly or upper-class secular music: fiddle, gittern, harp, lute, psaltery, and rebec. In particular, they note that the "soft" instruments do not appear to have been standardized in terms of size or tuning, and many texts, both European and Arabic, offer multiple alternate tunings for the string instruments.

The separation of wind and string instruments was not absolute, however, for there are examples of small ensembles including a lute and a flute, but the general principle of separating the two categories of instruments remained characteristic of medieval Mediterranean musical traditions for several centuries.

Summary: musical mutual intelligibility

For a few hundred years, musicians could travel in most regions of the Mediterranean and recognize almost everything they saw and heard in secular courtly musical performances in terms of the instruments used, basic theoretical principles, and performance practices, even if the specific musical traditions were local and distinct. The fact that musicians and singers could and did travel easily suggests that the musical cultures of these regions either were not dramatically different from one another and/or that wealthy patrons were receptive to hearing and supporting a variety of different musical styles. As we shall see, the documentation for musicians in "foreign" courts increases dramatically in the 13th to 15th centuries, when we find "Moorish" and Jewish musicians performing alongside northern Iberian musicians and minstrels visiting from nearly every country of Europe in the courts of Castile, Aragon and Catalonia.

Without downplaying the many differences that surely existed, these two chapters have argued that a certain amount of *musical* "mutual intelligibility" reigned for several centuries, which allowed traffic and trade in music and musicians through various routes around and across the Mediterranean to take place. The following two chapters will argue that the emergence of the new strophic song forms in Arabic and Hebrew is best understood as taking place within this complex web of cultural contacts.

When did this musical "mutual intelligibility" cease to exist? By the 15th century and certainly thereafter, a traveler from the Middle East in

Europe would have encountered a vastly different musical world in the northern regions of the Mediterranean. There would have been unfamiliar instruments (keyboard instruments such as the harpsichord and pianoforte) and strange musical techniques (polyphony and harmony). There would also have been ensembles of a type never seen before in which large numbers of instrumentalists, both wind and string players, performed as a single group, and also a musical culture where vocal musical was playing less and less of a role and where compositions solely for musical instruments were becoming more and more prominent.

In contrast, the medieval Islamic world pursued a path of greater and greater sophistication in modal theory over the next few centuries (resulting in some cases in nearly 100 recognized individual modes), highly articulated rhythmic theory (with dozens of recognized and carefully defined rhythms), tuning systems that subdivided the whole step into smaller and smaller units (microtones), and placing greater emphasis on artistic improvisation in performance than in the development of wholly pre-composed genres.

These divergences mark the end of a shared medieval Mediterranean musical culture.

Notes

1 Any number of other writers on music theory could be added to this list such as Cassiodorus, al-Ḥasan al-Kātib, Guido d'Arezzo, and others; these five authors are chosen merely as representatives of the general discourse on music theory during the early Middle Ages.

2 For more detailed discussion of medieval Arab music theory, see Maalouf 2002, Neubauer 1998b; Wright 1978.

3 Barker 1989: II, 150.

4 Both al-Fārābī and Ibn Sīnā, however, can be seen as having reintroduced some of Aristoxenus' ideas, Shehadeh 1995: 4.

5 Jamie James 1993: 60.

6 Barker 1989, II: 270.

7 J. James 1993: 36.

8 Qtd. in J. James, Ibid., 30.

9 Qtd. in J. James, Ibid., 39.

10 For a selection of writings on this topic from Ancient, Medieval, Renaissance and Early Modern authors, see Godwin 1993.

11 See, for example, Boethius 1989 and Bower 1984.

12 The traditional ballad "Scarborough Fair," for example, with its rather wistful feel, is in the Dorian mode (d e f g a b c' d'), which is neither major nor minor.

13 The basic eight Greek modes, for example, were supplemented by others, such as the plagal modes that extended from a fourth below the tonic to the fifth above the tonic.

14 It is intriguing that al-Kindī does not compare the Byzantine modes to the modes of Arab music, but rather to the eight basic *rhythms* of Arab music. This may be because he thought of the rhythms, with their tight connection to the meters of Arabic poetry, as a more fundamental expression of Arab culture. For the

connection between Arab rhythms and meters, see van Gelder 2012: 149–62, and for an analysis of medieval Arab rhythms, see Sawa 2009.

15 Shiloah 1974: 202–3.

16 The musical indications in KA have been referred to with a variety of terms by western scholars: Farmer, for example, termed them "song captions," whereas Kilpatrick refers to them as "performance indications." These all refer to the same brief statements that indicate the rhythm and the melodic mode of each song.

17 The term "fingers" refers to Isḥāq's nomenclature (discussed below); Farmer 1944: 201–4; [rpt. 1997: I, 53–7].

18 See discussion in Neubauer 1995–6: 264–5.

19 One exception appears to be the mode name *mazmūm.* Although al-Iṣbahānī eliminated it from the "song captions," the term appears within anecdotes at several places in KA, see Sawa 2015: 191. This is supported by references in al-Ḥasan al-Kātib 1975: 112; French trans. 1972: 159–60.

20 For analyses of the Mawṣilī "finger modes," see Collangettes 1906: 162–8; Sachs 1943: 280–1; Farmer 1944 [1953–4]; 1986; Wright 1966; Sawa [1989] 2004; Neubauer 1995–6.

21 Descriptions of this type were featured in several of the Arabic and Persian treatises on music theory written in the second half of the 13th c. and later, see Wright 1978.

22 West 2000: 57.

23 West, Ibid.: 58.

24 J. James 1993: 57.

25 Adapted from *Epistles of the Brethren of Purity* 2010: 83–4.

26 See Horden 2000.

27 J. James 1993: 32. West 2000: 59.

28 Shehadeh 1995: 29–30; for an overview, see Shiloah 2000: 69–83.

29 A very accessible account of early medieval polyphony can be found in Fuller 2011.

30 *Muqtabis*: 278. I would like to thank Jared Holton for bringing this passage to my attention,

31 Music theory was usually termed *mūsīqī* in the Middle Ages, but the word in Ibn Ḥayyān's text is written with a final "standing alif" rather than an "alif maqṣūra," hence *mūsīqā.*

32 See Farmer 1929: 30; rpt in 1997, I: 411–19.

33 Avenary 1952: 27–32.

34 Avenary, Ibid.: 28.

35 Shiloah 1979: 37.

36 Seroussi 2007: 31–2.

37 al-Ṭanjī 1968: 115; Liu and Monroe 1989: 42.

38 Ibn Bājja 1983: 72.

39 See Shiloah 1979: 156–7.

40 The two sections of this work dealing with Andalusian music have been edited by al-Ṭanjī 1968 and appear in English translation in Liu and Monroe 1989. The complete Arabic work has recently been edited and published, see al-Tīfāshī 2019.

41 The names of the poets are not found in the original, but have been supplied by al-Ṭanjī in footnotes; four of these songs are by Andalusi composers and are repeated in the second list of Andalusi songs.

42 *Mujtathth* in the original, which Liu and Monroe have amended to *mujannab* in light of the later passage describing tunings; *mujtathth* is a poetic meter, whereas

al-Tīfāshī uses the term *mujannab* to refer to a specific tuning of the lute (see below).

43 Wright 1992: 560–1.

44 See al-Ḥasan al-Kātib 1975: 112–17; trans. in Shiloah 1972: 159–65.

45 Wright 1978: 249–52.

46 Notes one octave higher are indicated with an apostrophe: c' is thus one octave higher than c.

47 *Tajnīb* is the act of placing a finger "next to" (*mujannab*) the adjacent finger, or, in the case of the index finger, net to the nut. See al-Ḥasan al-Kātib 1972: 161–2.

48 Avenary 1982.

49 This concept of a characteristic melodic contour or "path" for each mode is mentioned only a few times in medieval works on music theory; however, it was presumably part of a musician's basic competency.

50 Farmer 1939; The 1997 reprint, however, includes Farmer's later comments, corrections and emendations, Farmer 1997: 553–603. See also Shiloah's comments on two of these texts, 1979: 391–2, and 2003: 194–6.

51 See the charts comparing the lists of modes in various texts in Farmer 1939: 21, 34–5; Farmer 1997: II, 573, 584–5.

52 Guettat 2000: I, 261–6, gives a comparative chart with the modes and their names as found in 23 North African sources from the 16th to 20th centuries, each listing from 17 to 27 different modes. Although Cortés 1995 presents a number of different predecessors for the "tree of musical modes" (*shajarat ṭubū'*), the diagrams cited by Andalusi authors do not deal with musical modes, but rather such topics as varieties of love, the four humors, and so forth.

53 Sawa 2015: 191.

54 See Ibn Faḍl Allāh 2003: 583 (a song by Bahja), 594 (song by Fātik), 598 (song by Raghd). Most songs from the reign of al-Ḥakam I are labelled only with the rhythm and not with a melodic mode; some have no musical indications.

55 Farmer 1939/1997: 21/573; Guettat 2000: 363–9.

56 Mashāqa 1899: 726, "the *alḥān* known in our time in Syria" and (1899: 932) "the *alḥān* current in our time among the learned of Syria," cited in Marcus 1989: 833.

57 See Neubauer 1994: 103. For detailed studies of theoretical treatises on rhythm, see Neubauer: 1968–9, 1994, 2002, 2008, and Sawa 2004, 2009.

58 BA V: 304–37.

59 This passage was first published by Neubauer 1994: 117–18 and later analyzed in Sawa 2004 and 2009: 62–9.

60 Sawa 2009: 62.

61 See Sawa 1989 [2004]: 145–54; For al-Fārābī's ideas about instrumental music, the key passages in the KMK are 68–70, 74–5, 77, 79–80, 170. For an English summary of this information, see Sawa 1989 [2004]: 105–7.

62 KMK: 69. Sawa notes that there is no mention of a "postlude" and offers *maqṭa'* as a gloss for this idea, but I read this as a reference to the instrumental passages played in between phrases (*maqāṭi'*) of a song, perhaps comparable to the concept of *lāzima* (pl. *lawāzim*), the short instrumental responses in modern Arab music.

63 KMK: 68 & 80.

64 Stevenson 1960: 23–4.

65 Bachmann 1969: 318.

66 KA VI: 304, in this anecdote Ibrāhīm al-Mawṣilī sings accompanied by his brother-in-law, Manṣūr Zalzal and the famous flute player Barṣawmā.

67 KA VIII: 227–9.
68 KA V: 243.
69 Bowles 1954: 115. One should note, however, that the modern symphony orchestra balances dozens of string instruments against one or two of each of the wind instruments, a rather astonishing arrangement.
70 Bowles 1954: 121.
71 Brown and Polk 2001: 134–61.

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Section Four

The musical revolution in al-Andalus

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8 From *ṣawt* to *muwashshaḥ*

Sometime in the late 10th/early 11th century a new song-form emerged in al-Andalus that quickly spread throughout the Arabic-speaking world and has remained a living tradition in many urban centers until the present day.[1] Its origins have remained shrouded in mystery, which has provoked lively debates and the publication of literally hundreds of academic articles, chapters, and books.[2] The vast majority of these, however, deal with the *textual* features of these poems/songs, such as rhyme schemes, poetic meters, and so forth. In contrast, it is the aim of this chapter to review this question primarily from a *musical* point of view, and to make the argument that studying *muwashshaḥ*/*zajal* texts without taking into account the musical dimensions of this tradition may inadvertently exclude some of the most critical and distinctive features of the genre.[3] To understand how radically different this new song-form was, however, we need to begin with an understanding of the courtly song tradition that preceded it.

The musical structure of the medieval *ṣawt*

Medieval sources on Arab music usually refer to the songs performed by musicians in the early Islamic centuries by the term *ṣawt* (pl. *aṣwāt*), which, depending on context, meant "sound," "voice," or "song."[4] Al-Iṣbahānī explains in the introduction to *Kitāb al-Aghānī* (KA) that he has placed the term *ṣawt* over song lyrics to distinguish them from poems.[5] When referring to a song, medieval sources at times also use terms such as *ṣanʿa* and *ʿamal*, both meaning roughly a "work" or "composition," and sometimes *ughniyya* (song), but the song-form itself was most commonly known as *ṣawt*.[6] This was almost exclusively an oral tradition. Although songbooks gave the lyrics of songs, sometimes annotated with the names of the rhythm and mode of the melody, the melodies themselves had to be learned by ear from a teacher or listening to performances.[7] No notations of medieval *ṣawt* songs from before the 13th century have survived, despite the fact that KA reports that musicians were able to communicate the music of songs to each other in writing.[8]

In one account, for example, Ibrāhīm al-Mawṣilī is able to send Ibn al-Mahdī a new composition in writing that included "its rhythm [*īqāʿ*]" and its “measured section [*basīṭ*]” (KA X: 110). In another anecdote (KA X: 106), Ibrāhīm wrote a message about a song with:

> its lyrics [*bi-shiʿrihi*], its melodic mode [*majrāhu wa-iṣbaʿihi,* lit. “its courses and fingerings”], the syllables of the texts and their placement on the notes [*tajziʾatihi wa-aqsāmihi*], the location of every note by string and fret [*makhārij al-nagham*], the placement of every phrase [*mawāḍiʿ maqāṭiʿihi*], and the measure of its rhythmic cycles and its meters [*maqādīr adwārihi wa-awzānihi*].[9]

Unfortunately, we do not know anything more about this system of notation. What we know about the process of composing a *ṣawt* and musical structure, must therefore be gleaned from prose passages in KA and a handful of other works, rather than from the study of notated examples.

The majority of singers in the early Islamic and medieval period were precisely that – singers – meaning that they memorized and performed the compositions of other musicians, sometimes accompanying themselves on the lute, tambourine or beating time with a wand (*qaḍīb*). On the other hand, the famous virtuosi for whom we find extensive biographical notices were *singer-composers*. They not only memorized and performed large repertories of songs composed by others, but also composed new songs of their own, supplying their patrons with a constant flow of new material. It is the songs that they *composed*, along with their skill as performers, that secured them a place in the historical literature. Somewhat oddly, there was not a distinct term in Arabic for this role.[10] These figures are referred to by the same terms as other singers: [m.s. *mughannī*, f.s. *mughaniyya*], though the word *muṭrib* (f. *muṭriba*) was also occasionally in use, or by the special terminology used to designate female slave singers [s. *jāriya*, pl. *jawārī*, or *qayna,* pl. *qiyān* or *qaynāt*]. There is, however, a clear distinction in Arabic between composing a musical composition [*laḥḥana talḥīn* or *ṣanaʿa laḥn*] and composing poetry [*qāla* or *naẓama shiʿr*], and works such as KA are meticulous in citing who composed the lyrics and who composed the music to *ṣawt* songs. There was no acknowledged social role, however, for a musical composer [*mulaḥḥin*] who was not also a singer/performer.

The process of composing a *ṣawt* usually began with the selection of a small number of verses from an already existing poem. Only rarely did the singer-composer also compose the verses of a song, and that was typically for a special occasion. There are many accounts in the literature of singers struggling to find appropriate verses for a new song, either from a well-known poet or from an obscure one. These anecdotes make clear that one of the critical prerequisites of a successful singer-composer was to possess a large corpus of memorized poetry from which to choose material. Although it is possible that singer-composers at times referred to written collections of poetry, this is rarely depicted in the extant biographical accounts.

Patrons sometimes requested that their singers set specific verses to music, sometimes that verses of a particular poet be set to music, still other times that verses of a specific type or appropriate to a certain mood be set to music, and sometimes they simply demanded that the singer produce something new.

The texts of *ṣawt* songs were remarkably short, usually no more than two to four verses, and only rarely as long as six. The singer-composer typically selected these verses from a longer poem, and there was no expectation that they would respect the original ordering of the verses. Thus, the verses of a *ṣawt* might be verses 4, 5, 11 and 16 of the original poem, and at times singers even combined verses from different poems and different poets into a single *ṣawt*. Although singers reused verses by earlier poets, they were clearly a creative force, for the new arrangement could in fact give the quoted verses an entirely new meaning. Few, if any, comments by patrons or other musicians in KA, however, address the relationship between the song lyrics to their original poem. Patrons at times recognized well-known verses, and other times responded to performances by asking which poet had composed the verses they had just heard sung. It was an essential part of the craft of being a court musician to be able to name correctly the original poet, and mistakes in identification at times provoked lively debates and could lead to a public loss of face.[11]

Occasionally a singer-composer would compose or improvise verses of their own, which meant that they acted as poet, composer, and singer all at the same time (as "singer-songwriter" in modern terms). The composition of poetry was a skill expected of all educated people, especially members of the court, but, on the whole, lyrics composed by court singers were not of particularly high quality, and occasionally a patron would say so outright. In one anecdote, Ibrāhīm al-Mawṣilī was traveling with the caliph Hārūn al-Rashīd. At a rest stop, the caliph asked him to sing, and he began by singing some of his own verses:

> Al-Rashīd ordered that he be given a thousand dinars, but he did not like the poetry, so he said, "Ibrāhīm, your music [*ṣan'a*] is better than your poetry." Ibrāhīm was embarrassed and replied: "My Lord, my mind was occupied with composing the melody, so I said whatever popped into my head at the moment." At that, al-Rashid burst out laughing and retorted: "You got that right!" [KA V: 169]

Once a singer had selected the lyrics for a song, they might proceed by "borrowing" a melody from another song (with or without changes) or by setting the words to a completely new tune, which was the more common practice.[12] The practice of reusing the melody of an older song for the setting of new lyrics, called *contrafactum* composition, was not disparaged as long as the singer acknowledged their source.[13] The opening melody of Isḥāq al-Mawṣilī's setting for the famous lyric *Tashakkā al-kumayt* ("The chestnut stallion complained"), for example, was apparently taken from an earlier song by al-Abjar called *Mā abkāka* ("What has caused you to weep?") [KA: I, 235].[14] The reverse process was also common, that is, taking the lyrics from an earlier song and setting it to a new melody. Many songs in KA and later songbooks include references to other songs with the same melody or the same lyrics, by different composers. An additional process was when a singer-composer created an amendment [*ziyāda*] or improvement [*tahdhīb*] to an earlier song, which was also commonly noted in songbooks. Here, as an example, are al-Iṣbahānī's comments on a song sung by Ibrāhīm al-Mawṣilī to the caliph Musā al-Hādī (r. 785–6), noting that the lyric consists of the fifth, first, and second verses of the original poem, and comparing this to settings by other singer-composers:

> The poetry is by Abū Sakhr al-Hudhalī and the melody is by Ma'bad. The melody starts with the [third] verse, *wa-yā hajar Laylā* [Layla has departed], and after that, the second, and then the first verse; it is in the "second heavy" rhythm on the third-finger fret according to 'Amr ibn al-Bāna. Ibn Surayj composed a song using the sixth and seventh, then the fourth and fifth verses of this poem, in the "first heavy" rhythm according to al-Hishāmī. 'Arīb also composed a setting of the sixth, seventh, fourth and fifth verses, in the "first heavy" rhythm, and the caliph al-Wāthiq composed a setting in the *ramal* rhythm, which he had composed before 'Arīb's version, and later she performed his selection to her own melody. Some people mistakenly attribute the melody of Ma'bad to Ibn Surayj and that of Ibn Surayj to Ma'bad. [KA V: 185–6]

There were therefore at least four different settings using selected verses from the same original poem in two different arrangements (verses 5–2–1 and 6–7–4–5) with four different melodies in three different rhythms, all in circulation at the same time.

The rhythm chosen for a song was a crucial element, for there were strong associations between certain rhythms and different moods.[15] The slower, heavier [*thaqīl*] rhythms, of which there were three varieties, were thought to be more appropriate for solemn themes and were considered more complex and more difficult to perform. In contrast, the lighter, faster rhythms such as *hazaj* were fit for cheerful, lively, and amusing songs. Quite a few singers are cited as only being able to perform the lighter repertory, while the heavier more intricate songs were performed only by the most skillful singers. Most *ṣawt* songs were composed in a single rhythm, though a handful of examples in KA include a change of rhythm. Most were also within a single melodic mode. There were, however, two recognized "performance modes" termed *nashīd* (or *istihlāl*) and *basīṭ*, which refer to singing in an unmeasured fashion and to singing in a measured (i.e., rhythmic) manner respectively.[16] Although the *nashīd* section of a performance always preceded the *basīṭ*, it is unclear whether the transition from one to the other was predetermined by the composition, or if it was a choice made by the singer in performance. In one case, for example, the caliph al-Muntaṣir (r. 861–2) ordered the female slave singer ʻArīb to sing a particular song rendering the first verses in *nashīd* with a shift to *basīṭ* in the final verse [KA VIII: 304].[17]

One part of the process of setting of a text to music that is mentioned numerous times in KA is the process of fixing the syllables of the text to the rhythm of the song, referred to as *istiwā'* (to "even out" or "smooth out") or *tajzi'a* (to "set the parts in place"). Several anecdotes recount that musicians would rehearse a new composition again and again, alone, with an accompanist, or with another singer, to set the syllables of the text to the melody and rhythm. Ibn al-Mahdī, for example, is said to have "stolen" a song from his rival Ibrāhīm al-Mawṣiliī when he chanced to walk down an alleyway underneath the balcony where the great musician was rehearsing a new song. He had composed it for the caliph Hārūn al-Rashīd and was repeating it over and over with the help of two of his female slave singers in order to "smooth out" the words to the rhythm. Ibn al-Mahdī listened long enough to memorize it. The next day in court, when al-Mawṣilī sang the song, stating that it was a new composition, Ibn al-Mahdī accused him of passing off an older, well-known composition as his own. To substantiate his claim, he performed the new piece exactly as al-Mawṣilī had, to al-Mawṣilī's bewilderment and Hārūn al-Rashīd's rage. Only when al-Mawṣilī was threatened with dire punishments for his "lie" did Ibn al-Mahdī step forward to explain what had really happened.[18]

There are several rather poetic accounts in KA from singers about how they went about composing a *ṣawt.* The great singer Maʻbad once replied to a query about his composition technique with the following: "I mount my young camel, tap out the rhythm with a stick on the saddle, and work on setting the melody to the poetry by singing it quietly to myself until the song is smoothed out [*istawā*] to my liking."[19] Ibrāhīm al-Mawṣilī responded to a similar question from Hārūn al-Rashīd by saying, "Sire, I empty my mind of cares and imagine *ṭarab* in front of me, so that the paths of the melody I seek open up for me, and I follow them, guided by the rhythm. Then I return triumphant, having obtained what I desired!"[20] The phrase *umaththilu al-ṭarab bayna ʻaynayya* is intriguing. Since *ṭarab* can refer to music, we might understand this as "picturing" or "imagining" music before my eyes, but the phrase might be better rendered as "imagining the feeling of *ṭarab*," that is, of being deeply moved emotionally, or simply, "getting in the mood."

If the singer-composers offer somewhat romanticized accounts of composing songs, al-Fārābī, on the other hand, presents a lengthy, scientific (almost mechanistic) discussion of the process of composition in his *Kitāb al-mūsīqī al-kabīr* [hereafter KMK].[21] He begins by discussing the difference between notes produced by the human voice and those produced by other means, and laments the fact that neither musicians nor scholars have developed a technical vocabulary for the many qualities of the human voice (such as hoarseness, smoothness, sharpness, softness, nasal quality, etc.), so he is forced to describe these characteristics as best he can in his own words. The significance of this problem is that these very qualities of the human voice are, according to al-Fārābī, what awaken in the listener emotions such as mercy, cruelty, grief, fear, *ṭarab*, anger, pleasure, pain, and so forth.[22] These qualities, and not the notes in and of themselves, are evocative, which is what sets singing apart from other types of music-making. He then carefully analyzes all of the phonemes of the Arabic language for their capacity to be extended and held in singing, discussing long versus short vowels (noting that in song when a short syllable lands on an extended note it plays the role of a long syllable), along with the beauty or ugliness of various phonemes, and noting that certain consonants (L, M, N) can be extended in song even without a vowel.[23]

Al-Fārābī then addresses the twin arts of composing a melody to fit a given text or setting a text to a given melody. In conversation, he explains, we do not separate phonemes of speech with musical notes or pauses (if we did, our utterances would be incomprehensible); however, when setting words to a melody, we are forced to separate phonemes in an unnatural fashion by setting them to long notes or by inserting notes that prolong the pause between phonemes. His technique therefore starts with counting the number of notes and the number of syllables and determining the relationship between the two: if the two are equal, then the setting could be syllabic (one syllable per note), but this is not very beautiful. Another option is to allow the melodies to have "empty notes" [*alḥān fārighat al-nagham*], that is, notes that do not have a new syllable attached to them and are deemed "empty" by virtue of the fact that they are part of a melisma (stretching a word out over several notes). His concept of "empty notes" may also include notes that are played by the accompanying instrument(s) in between sung phrases, although he does not state this expressly. In melodies with "full notes" [*alḥān mamluwwat al-nagham*] in contrast, a "full note" is one that coincides with the onset of a new phoneme. The use of too many "empty notes" between syllables, however, can make the words hard to understand. The best choice is, therefore, to have a "mixed" composition [*laḥn makhlūṭ minhumā*], where the setting is at times syllabic and at times filled with melismas or instrumental passages, so that the melody is both beautiful and the words understood. In a fascinating observation, al-Fārābī notes that it is those passages where the spacing of syllables is furthest from normal speech that possess the most beauty and produce the most pleasure.[24]

A glimpse of how complex the melodic setting of a very short text could be is found in the account of a new composition by Isḥāq al-Mawṣilī. Since his own voice was not especially beautiful, he chose to teach this song to a charming slave singer, Shajā, and sent her to perform it for the caliph in his stead. This song, al-Iṣbahānī notes, "is one of Isḥāq's eternal and most extraordinary compositions" [*wa-hādhā al-ṣawt min awābid Isḥāq wa-badā'i'ih*].[25] The first verse of this two-verse song consists of only four words:

> *al-ṭulūlu wa-l-dawārisu fāraqathā al-awānisu*
> The traces and remains have been abandoned by the people

This is a common trope in classical Arabic poetry – the vestiges of an abandoned campsite in the desert evoke for the poet a beloved who has departed and thus the ephemerality of human existence. This motif was used so many times by so many poets in different variations that it acquired a name: *al-bukā' 'alā al-aṭlāl*, "weeping over the remains [of an encampment]," and in later centuries was parodied by urban poets. For our purposes, the important aspect of the lyric is that it is an extremely short text. After hearing the song for the first time, the caliph al-Wāthiq remarked:

> The first verse of this song is but four words … Look and see whether there is any technique in the art of singing that Isḥāq did not manage to put into these four words! He started out in *nashīd* and then followed that with *basīṭ*, in it he shouts and he "coos," [in some places] he gives preponderance to the melody and [in others] he steals from it, and he did all of this in four words! Have you ever heard of anyone among the ancients or the moderns who has composed the like, or is even capable of this?[26]

As we have seen, *nashīd* refers to unmeasured singing and *basīṭ* to rhythmic singing, so presumably the song started out with several repetitions of these four words, first in an emotion-filled free form, and then moved on, with the beginning of the rhythmic beat, to a more structured section.[27] Giving preponderance to the melody may refer to the use of long melismatic phrases in which syllables are stretched out over several notes, while "stealing from the melody" appears to refer to the opposite technique, perhaps a type of *recitativo* singing in which the text is sung almost in a monotone. The terms "shout" and "coo" can refer to both the manner of singing and also to climbing very high and descending very low in pitch, so this opening section of the song also appears to explore the singer's full vocal range.[28] Even if we cannot recuperate the details, this passage demonstrates that a very simple text of a mere four words could be set to an extremely sophisticated musical composition. It is also clear that these four words must have been repeated many times during the performance, so a short text was not necessarily indicative of a short composition.

In a later description of courtly song performance, the 13th-century Tunisian author al-Tīfāshī writes:

> In Ifrīqiya, we heard an Andalusi singer sing a lyric taken from the poem by Abū Tammām that starts *Wa-munfaridun bi-l-ḥusni khilwun min al-hawā* ["Singular in beauty, free from love"], and I counted seventy-four *hazza* [lit. "shakes"] in that one verse. I also heard a female slave singer in a gathering at the home of a Maghribi notable sing *Tashakkā l-kumaytu al-jarī lammā jahadtuhu* ["The chestnut stallion complained from the pace when I spurred him on"], and she sang that one verse for nearly two hours.[29]

We do not know exactly what type of vocal ornamentation a *hazza* was, but it was presumably some sort of trill, tremolo, grace note, or perhaps even an appoggiatura.[30] Likewise, we do not know precisely how the female singer spent two hours interpreting a single line, but it seems clear that this was an extended improvisation.

These and many other passages that describe similar performances demonstrate that the *ṣawt* was an intensely *melocentric* genre in which a relatively short text served as the vehicle for rather lengthy, sophisticated melodic compositions that were intricately ornamented and performable only by highly trained professionals. A *logocentric* form, in contrast, is one where the focus is on the text and the music is typically not as highly ornamented, such as in a traditional English folk ballad or in the performance of epic songs in the modern Balkans or Central Asia. This is precisely one of the great changes that took place when the new *muwashshaḥ/zajal* song-form emerged. The *ṣawt*, a highly melocentric tradition with simple texts but very complex melodies, which was almost always performed by professional solo singers, was suddenly faced with a rival, the *muwashshaḥ/zajal* song-form, that boasted poetically ornate and comparatively lengthy texts that were performed to relatively simple melodies, which were far more accessible to the masses and could be performed by many singers singing together as a chorus.

The *muwashshaḥ/zajal* song-form

Given the propensity of the Arabic historiographical tradition to attribute new cultural developments to real or mythic individuals, it should come as no surprise that the most significant Arabic musico-poetic innovations of the medieval period were attributed by medieval authors to specific individuals. Ibn Bassām al-Santarīnī (d. 1147) in *al-Dhakhīra* states that one Muḥammad ibn Maḥmūd al-Qabrī al-Ḍarīr ("the Blind") created the *muwashshaḥ* genre at the end of the 9th century by using "foreign" (*ʿajamī*) words as a "base" (*markaz*) for an Arabic poem, but Ibn Bassām also attributes its creation to one of the towering figures of Andalusi letters, Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih (860–940).[31] Of the first figure we know almost nothing, and the link to Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih is almost certainly spurious since his literary production is relatively well documented and no *muwashshaḥ* poems are attributed to him in contemporary sources. Ibn Bassām goes on to say that the basic form of the *muwashshaḥ* was later modified by Yūsuf ibn Hārūn al-Ramādī (d. 1013), court poet to al-Manṣūr, who added more rhymes in one part, and was then further embellished by Ibn ʿUbāda [*sic* – cf. ʿUbāda al-Qazzāz below], at the court of Abū Yaḥyā Muʿizz al-Dawla al-Muʿtaṣim of Almería (r. 1052–91), who added still further rhymes in another part. This passage presents a number of problems, not least of which is that one key word has confounded copyists and scholars alike.[32] The general outlines of Ibn Bassām's depiction of the development of the *muwashshaḥ*, however, are clear: a simple form emerged first that had rhymes only at the end of the lines, as in traditional Arabic poetry, but later, one poet began to add internal rhymes in one section, and another poet inserted internal rhymes in to the other section, and the form eventually possessed rhymes scattered throughout the poem (see below).

Ibn Sa‘īd (1213–86), quoting al-Ḥijārī (fl. 12th c), in a passage reproduced in Ibn Khaldūn's 14th-century *Muqaddima*, however, gives the name of the purported creator as Muqaddam ibn Mu‘āfā al-Qabrī or ibn Ma‘ārif al-Qabrīrī, court poet to the emir ‘Abd Allāh ibn Muḥammad (r. 888–912), who is said to have taught this art to Ibn ‘Abd Rabbih.[33] Ibn Khaldūn then states, however, that their *muwashshaḥāt* did not find favor (*kasadat*), and that the next practitioner of this art did not appear until over a century later, the poet ‘Ubāda al-Qazzāz, who served al-Mu‘taṣim of Almería (r. 1052–91), during the period of the Ṭā'ifa kingdoms following the collapse of the Umayyad caliphate in Cordoba in 1031.[34] Whether we read these ascriptions as historical or legendary, no *muwashshaḥāt* from either the 9th or 10th century appear to have survived, and it is only with the 11th century that we can discuss the genre's emergence on a firm historical footing.[35]

What were the features of this new poetry/song-form that so radically set it apart from earlier Arabic lyrics? As we have seen, the courtly *ṣawt* song consisted of an extremely short text, usually taken from a longer, mono-endrhymed poem, in which each line was divided into two equal hemistichs. A schematized rendering of a two-verse *ṣawt* (reading left to right), with capital X marking the end-rhyme, looks something like this:

--------------- --------------X
--------------- --------------X

The new *muwashshaḥ/zajal* form broke with this tradition in several ways.[36] Perhaps its single most important characteristic is that it consists of *two alternating sections*: one section retains the same end-rhyme throughout the poem and is referred to here as the "common rhyme" section, and the other section introduces new rhymes each time it recurs, and is called the "changing rhyme" section. One common-rhyme section and one changing-rhyme section together form a strophe, and medieval *muwashshaḥāt* often had five or more strophes (thus ranging from 25–40 verses or more), making them quite lengthy compositions in comparison with the laconic courtly *ṣawt.* This structure was entirely new in Arabic poetry and forced medieval scholars to create their own terminology for these alternating sections, leading to a plethora of rather confusing, and at times contradictory, labels.[37] It is therefore easier to use English labels here rather than to repeatedly gloss all of the various Arabic terms. As we shall see below, this basic two-part structure is found not only in the poetry, but also in the music.

The second most obvious feature of a *muwashshaḥ/zajal*, visible at a glance, is that these two sections almost always had verses of different lengths, so the poem/song unfolds in alternating clusters of short and long verses. The distinctive shape created by the pattern of long and short verses may have given the form its name, since one meaning of *muwashshaḥ* derives from the idea of an embroidered "girdle" or sash worn by women (some Western scholars have referred to *muwashshaḥāt* as "girdle poems"), though there are several other competing explanations as well. [see Figure 12]

Schematic diagrams can be very dry, but the one below attempts to demonstrate the most basic typical structure of a *muwashshaḥ*. The "common-rhyme" section always retains the same end-rhyme (here marked A), and the "changing-rhyme" section has different rhymes (B, C, D). This example starts with the common-rhyme section, and would therefore be termed "complete" (*tāmm*), whereas if it started instead with the changing-rhyme section it was called "bald" or "acephalous" (*aqra'*). The opening verses were termed the *maṭla'* (starting point, beginning) and the final verses were called the *kharja* (exit, finale).[38]

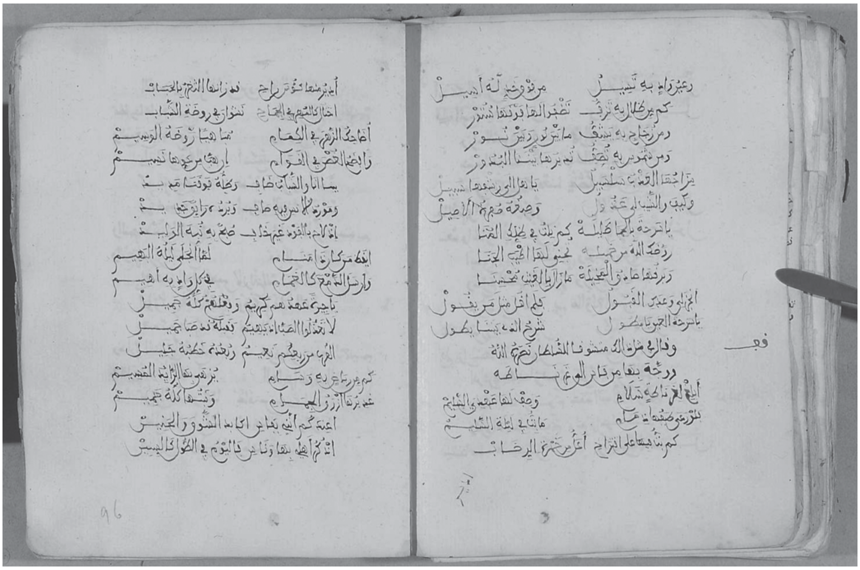

Figure 12 Pages from a North African songbook of *muwashshaḥāt* showing the unequal verse lengths and the changing rhyme scheme.

(reading right to left, the rhymes appear as the last letters on the left-hand edge of the page). The red word in the margin (*qif* "stop") marks the end of one lyric and the beginning of the next.

(Source: author photo).

		Rhyme
Common-rhyme	---------- ---------A	*Maṭla‘* (Opening verses)
	---------- ---------A	
	--------------- --------------B	
Changing-rhyme	--------------- --------------B	
	--------------- --------------B	
Common-rhyme	---------- --------A	
	---------- --------A	
	--------------- --------------C	
Changing-rhyme	--------------- --------------C	
	--------------- --------------C	
Common-rhyme	---------- ---------A	
	---------- ---------A	
	--------------- --------------D	
Changing-rhyme	--------------- --------------D	
	--------------- --------------D	
	(etc.)	
Common-rhyme	---------- ---------A	*Kharja* (Closing Verses)
	---------- ---------A	

This diagram shows a basic version with two verses in the common-rhyme section and three in the changing-rhyme and only one rhyme per line, but there were many possible combinations. As soon as the mold of the monoendrhyme poem was broken, poets began experimenting with flamboyant patterns of rhymes by using different numbers of lines in each section and inserting additional rhymes inside each line (as per Ibn Bassām's account). Here, for example, is the text of a *muwashshaḥ* from the modern repertory of Tlemcen, Algeria, with three rhymes in each line of the first section and a single rhyme in each line of the second section (the first line of the next strophe is included here):[39]

*Al-hawā dhall al-us**ūd*** * *A`ṭaf wa-j**ūd*** * *bi-llādhī anshā bah**āk***
*Kuff min hādhā s-sud**ūd*** * *Awfā l-`uh**ūd*** * *mā `ashaq*
*qalbi saw**āk***
*Nār qalbī fī wuq**ūd*** * *Bi-lā juḥ**ūd*** * *Ah yā maṣ`ab jaf**āk***
*Yā ẓarīf al-ibtis**ām***
*Mā murr al-ghur**ām***
*Ṣuḥtu min ba`d al-diy**ān*** * *Ashkū jih**ār*** * *hādhā khabarī*
*wa-s-sal**ām***

(etc.)

Love has humbled lions / Show me affection and generosity / By He who has created your beauty
Cease this resistance / Fulfill your promises / My heart has loved no other

The fire of my heart is kindled / It cannot be denied / How difficult is your rejection!
O you with the gracious smile,
How bitter it is to be in love!
I cry out after this trial / I publicly complain / This is my state and so good-bye!

The *kharja*

The early *muwashshaḥ* compositions also broke with the previous poetic tradition in another fascinating way. Some of them concluded with a few final verses (the *kharja*) that were in colloquial Arabic, Romance (proto-Spanish) or a mixture of Arabic and Romance, often a quotation cited as the words of a young woman, with a tart, almost sassy, tone to them:

No kéro ya un khaléllo / illá assamréllo[40]
I no longer want any lover / except the dark-skinned one

The Romance elements here include *No kéro* (= no quiero, "I do not want"), *ya* ("any longer") the indefinite article *un,* and the two diminutive endings – *éllo* (= illo), while the remaining words are derived from Arabic *khalīl* ("lover"), *illā* ("except," "other than"), and *al-asmar* ("the dark-skinned one"). For many years scholars were unable to decipher these passages which, in Arabic script, looked like gibberish, until in the mid-20th century, Samuel Miklos Stern was able to unravel and translate 20 Romance *kharja*s from Hebrew *muwashshaḥāt*.[41] Eventually scholars were able to assemble a corpus of some 60 Romance and bilingual Arabic-Romance *kharja*s from Arabic *muwashshaḥāt* as well.[42] Given that the body of *muwashshaḥāt* composed in al-Andalus includes hundreds of examples that do not have bilingual *kharja*s, nor are bilingual *kharja*s found in the thousands of *muwashshaḥāt* composed in other areas of the Arabic-speaking Middle East, it seems that, however crucial the role the bilingual *kharja* played in the early development of the genre, it rather quickly disappeared.[43]

Poems very similar to the tone and style of the Romance and bilingual *kharja*s are found in modern Arabic oral tradition, particularly among women. The genre of *ḥawfī*, for example, sung in gatherings of women and girls, shares many of the themes and features of the medieval *kharja* including complaints about love addressed to the speaker's mother and others:

I planted jasmine in the heart of our house,
Its roots are ginger and its branches verdigris.
Mother, O mother, what is more powerful than love between neighbors?
There is passion in our eyes and our hearts are on fire![44]

and

> Aunt, O aunt, keep watch over your son!
> When I was watering the basil, he tossed lemons at me.
> I would not marry your son, even if he covered me with riches,
> I'll marry a handsome young man whose figure pleases me.[45]

Even a brief comparison of these poems demonstrates a large number of shared themes and motifs expressed in a very similar form.[46] This is not to suggest that one of these genres is the origin of the other, but rather that, as with so many oral traditions, we are probably dealing with features that are shared across cultures and languages that have lived in close proximity for centuries.

If the rise of strophic poetry in 11th-century al-Andalus had previously provoked relatively little interest from Western scholars, Stern's publications on Romance and bilingual *kharja*s unleashed floodgates of speculation and stimulated a lively discussion about the origins of the *muwashshaḥ/zajal* genre.[47] Some scholars trace its roots to various experimentations in multi-rhymed Arabic poetry in the Mashriq, others have hypothesized that the *kharja*s were proof that an independent oral tradition of rhymed poetry existed among medieval Romance speakers. Some scholars argue that the *kharja*s are snippets from actual folk songs and may have played the role of indicating the tune to which the lyrics should be sung, while others see the *kharja*s as the work of partially bilingual Arab poets who capped their classical Arabic love songs with a bit of sassy street doggerel.[48] No conclusive evidence has been found for any of these hypotheses, so the debate continues.

Muwashshaḥ versus *zajal*

Medieval Arabic sources are very clear that the distinction between the *muwashshaḥ* and the *zajal* was one of linguistic register: the *muwashshaḥ* was composed in classical Arabic and the *zajal* was composed in colloquial Andalusi dialect. That distinction, however, can be less obvious than one might assume. The purest form of classical Arabic includes case-endings at the ends of nouns and vocalic endings to verb conjugations, most of which are not normally written except in special circumstances, such as when citing the Qur'an. Another level of language that might also be termed "classical" – especially in contrast to very colloquial Arabic – is Arabic that retains classical vocabulary, but is pronounced without the full declension of case-endings, as is the case with many *muwashshaḥāt* in modern oral tradition throughout the Arab Middle East, including the example from Tlemcen cited above. Were medieval *muwashshaḥāt* consistently pronounced with *all* of the classical case-endings or did they resemble *muwashshaḥāt* as they are performed in modern times? Some *muwashshaḥāt* were composed following the traditional meters of classical Arabic poetry, and for these we can usually determine whether or not they were pronounced with case-endings because the meter dictates that there are syllables where the "invisible" (in the sense of unwritten) endings fall. But, as we shall see below, even our medieval sources tell us that the majority of *muwashshaḥāt* were *not* composed in the classical meters, and for those we simply cannot tell for sure how they were pronounced.

The *zajal*, too, proves equally difficult to delineate. If we look at the poems/songs of the single most famous composer of *zajal*s, Ibn Quzmān (1078–1160), there is no doubt whatsoever.[49] His language is colloquial in the extreme, filled with street slang and words and expressions borrowed from Romance; no speaker of Arabic could mistake this for classical Arabic (indeed, it requires quite a bit of effort for a reader used to reading standard Arabic to pick their way through Ibn Quzmān's colloquialisms).[50] But few poets chose to follow Ibn Quzmān in writing poems/songs in this clearly colloquial linguistic register, and the majority of *zajal* poems are in fact composed in a sort of hybrid language that combines literary with colloquial features.[51] In medieval collections of poems by famous figures such as Abū l-Ḥasan al-Shushtarī (1212–69), for example, who composed both *zajal* and *muwashshaḥ* songs, it is not always easy to determine the difference.[52] The issue is further complicated because the term *zajal* came to be used in many regions of the Arab World as a generic term for "colloquial poetry," and is frequently used to refer to types of poetry that do not bear any formal resemblance to the strophic form of their medieval Iberian namesake.

Samuel Stern introduced into western scholarship the idea that the *zajal* was defined not only by its linguistic register, but also constituted a separate *form* from the *muwashshaḥ.* This claim was based on the idea that the majority of medieval *zajal*s (a genre defined almost solely by the corpus of Ibn Quzmān) repeated only *half* of the rhyme scheme of the *maṭla‘* and did not possess a *kharja*:[53]

Muwashshaḥ: *aa bbbaa cccaa dddaa ...*
Zajal: *aa bbba ccca ddda …*

There is evidence that both forms were at times performed with a repetition of the opening *maṭla‘* as a true refrain, meaning that the actual words were repeated and not just the rhyme. If we use [AA] to indicate the *maṭla‘-refrain* and *a* to indicate the subsequent verses that carry the rhyme of the *maṭla‘* but in different words, then a performance would be as follows:

Muwashshaḥ: *[AA] bbbaa [AA] cccaa [AA] dddaa ...*
Zajal: *[AA] bbba [AA] ccca [AA] ddda …*

The evidence for when and if the *maṭla‘* was repeated as a refrain in performance, however, is very limited. Unfortunately, once the idea that the *zajal* was defined by its *form* rather than its linguistic register was launched by Stern, it spread to almost all analyses of these genres.[54] That belief has led scholars to struggle with what they deemed hybrid forms that have been dubbed "*muwashshaḥ*-like *zajal*s" and "*zajal*-like *muwashshaḥ*s," curious concepts that would have baffled the composers of those texts!

The "single-line form" (where only *half* of the opening *maṭla'* rhyme occurs in each of the subsequent strophes) is, however, of particular interest. For if one focuses solely on rhyme as the definitive feature, this form appears to be closely cognate with a number of different song forms in the Romance languages that flourished in the 13th–15th centuries, including the *cantiga*, *virelai*, *dansa*, *ballata*, and *villancico*. This similarity has motivated many discussions among scholars wishing to prove definitely which culture produced the *original* form. For our purposes here, however, the key element is that, to the best of my knowledge, there is no evidence that strophic songs in classical Arabic (i.e., *muwashshaḥāt*) or in colloquial Arabic (i.e., *zajal*s), in either the single-line or double-line forms, differed *musically* in structure (see below). They are therefore dealt with here as a single "song-form."

The musical structure of the medieval *muwashshaḥ*

The questions raised in this chapter focus primarily on the *musical* structure of the medieval *muwashshaḥ/zajal*. For that we must start with the earliest and most important medieval description of the *muwashshaḥ*, a treatise titled *Dār al-Ṭirāz fī 'amal al-muwashshaḥāt* [*The House of Brocade on the Composition of* Muwashshaḥāt], composed in Cairo by the Egyptian scholar, poet, and vizier Ibn Sanā' al-Mulk.[55]

Ibn Sanā' al-Mulk and *Dār al-Ṭirāz*

Abū al-Qāsim Hibat Allāh ibn Ja'far ibn Sanā' al-Mulk is commonly referred to in western sources as Ibn Sanā' al-Mulk and in Arabic sources as al-Qāḍī al-Sa'īd ["the Fortunate Judge"] (ca. 1155–1212). He was the son of al-Qāḍī al-Rashīd ["the Rightly Guided Judge"], Ja'far ibn Sanā' al-Mulk, and was a friend and correspondent of al-Qāḍī al-Fāḍil ["the Eminent Judge"], 'Abd al-Raḥīm al-Bīsanī (1133–99), who was a close advisor to Salāḥ al-Dīn [Saladin] and one of the most famous literary and political figures of his day.[56] Biographical entries about Ibn Sanā' al-Mulk are found in most of the major prosopographical collections from the 13th to 15th centuries.

His education seems to have been rather unremarkable and he appears to have traveled very little during his lifetime: we know of only one trip to Alexandria as a youth to study *ḥadīth*, and another, much later, to Damascus where he served in a government post for a short time before returning to his native Cairo. The biographical literature contains no evidence that Ibn Sanā' al-Mulk was himself a musician, singer, or composer, but this fact should not be over-interpreted since these talents were often only mentioned if the subject's skills in these areas were extraordinary and/or had come to general public notice for some reason or another.

Ibn Sanā' al-Mulk mentions that he took a liking to *muwashshaḥāt* in his youth:

> When I was in the vanguard of my youth and the forefront of my years, I fell passionately in love with them and was madly enamored of them; I made their acquaintance by listening to them and became their constant companion by memorizing them …[57]

Indications within the text of *Dār al-Ṭirāz*, as well as evidence from a variety of other sources, indicate that he heard these *muwashsḥahāt* performed as songs.[58] The text also seems to indicate that Ibn Sanā' al-Mulk's knowledge of music was not that of a scholar of music, for he uses none of the technical musical terminology of his day, but instead speaks of music in layman's terms

He tells us that as an adult he spent years studying and analyzing the *muwashshaḥ*. He also complains (or perhaps boasts) that he could not find a teacher who could teach him this art, and he therefore had to learn it entirely on his own. Writing of himself in the third-person, he says: "he did not find a teacher from whom to acquire this science nor a composer from whom to learn this art …"[59] Here, however, the biographical literature provides a different story. Al-Ṣafadī (quoting Yāqūt al-Ḥamawī) states that in the gatherings of Shaykh Abū l-Maḥāsin al-Bahnasī the linguist [*al-lughawī*] Ibn Sanā' al-Mulk met a *maghribī* [Moroccan/North African] man who:

> engaged in the composition of *maghribī muwashshaḥāt* as well as *zajal*s and he introduced Ibn Sanā' al-Mulk to their secrets and discussed them with him at such great length that he was motivated to compose *muwashshahāt* of his own that were even more beautiful than those of the people of the Maghrib.[60]

This passage recurs almost verbatim in the *Qalā'id al-jumān* of Ibn al-Sha"ār, quoted in the introduction to Muḥammad Zakariyā 'Inānī's edition of *Dār al-Ṭirāz* and a similar passage appears in a biographical work by Ibn Abī 'Udhayba (d. 1355).[61]

These two differing views, however, are not entirely contradictory if we surmise that the *maghribī* man whom Ibn Sanā' al-Mulk met in al-Bahnasī's gatherings was what we might today call "a good informant," that is, someone who could recite or sing to him – in other words, teach him – a large repertory of *muwashshaḥāt* and, more importantly for our purposes here, tell him about the singing of *muwashshaḥāt* in the Maghrib and al-Andalus, but who was not himself engaged in analyzing and classifying that repertory.

It seems likely then that Ibn Sanā' al-Mulk did not have a technical understanding of music, but rather knew music as an amateur musician or a layman would, and that the information he offers about music in the Maghrib and al-Andalus is second-hand and is therefore not very precisely transmitted. Given these doubts about Ibn Sanā' al-Mulk's musical expertise, one might well wonder whether his own *muwashshaḥāt*, such as those he included in *Dār al-Ṭirāz*, were composed as poems or songs, and, if the latter, whether he himself composed the music. Another work by Ibn Sanā' al-Mulk provides a partial answer. *Fuṣūṣ al-fuṣūl wa-'uqūd al-'uqūl* [*Jewels of Writings and Necklaces of Minds*][62] contains a collection of letters by Ibn Sanā' al-Mulk, most of which are written to his father. One of those letters includes a passage about one of Ibn Sanā' al-Mulk's own *muwashshaḥāt* (terms emphasizing that these songs were **sung** appear in boldface):

> *udīrat 'alayhi al-akwābu wa-khuriqat fīhi al-thiyābu wa-**shadā** bihi al-rijālu wa-l-niswānu wa-*__tarannama__ *bihi al-shuyūkhu wa-l-shubbānu […] wa-*__ghannā__ *bihi man lā* __yughannī__ *mugharridan*[63] *[…]wa-kam min majlisin **shadā** fīhi wa-alhā al-nadīma 'an ka'sihi wa-unsihi, wa-kam min ṣūfīyin sami'ahu fa-qāma ilā lahwihi min qu'ūdihi, wa-'awwādin **ghannā** bihi fa-ra'ā fī l-nutūq ghāyat su'ūdihi min 'ūdihi…*
>
> … to the accompaniment of [this *muwashshaḥ*] the cups have been passed round, and at hearing it [listeners] have ripped open their gowns, it has been **sung** by women and by men, it has been **sung** by elders and by youths […] Those who do not know how to **sing** have **sung** it as sweetly as the chirping of the birds […] O in how many […] gatherings has it been **sung,** causing those present to be distracted from their wine and the company! How many Sufis have heard it and out of pleasure given up their abstinence! How many lute-players have **sung** it and in performing it reached the pinnacle of pleasure with their lutes![64]

Apparently Ibn Sanā' al-Mulk's *muwashshaḥ* had a nearly irresistible – one might even say dangerous! – effect upon the general population. The critical point for our purposes is that the terms he uses for singing in this passage – *shadā*, *ghannā*, *tarannama* – are all unmistakably musical terms, unlike more ambiguous terms such as *qāla* (to say, recite, compose, sing) or *anshada* (to recite, sing, cantillate, declaim). At the same time, however, he notes that he sent this poem to his father in a letter, so it also circulated in a written (unsung) form.

Even if we might not fully accept Ibn Sanā' al-Mulk's claims for the popularity of his *muwashshaḥ*, he is clearly stating that it was *sung*. We do not know, however, whether he himself composed the tunes to his songs. Given that Ibn Sanā' al-Mulk was in almost every other way copying a tradition he did not know firsthand, we might well hazard a guess that he set his texts to already extant tunes, that is, that he composed his *muwashsḥahāt* by *contrafactum*, a widespread practice that we can document from almost all periods of the *muwashshaḥ*'s history.

Ibn Sanā' al-Mulk begins his treatise with a long passage of flowery praise of the art of the *muwashshaḥ*, but what then draws the author's immediate attention is the remarkable number of variant structures of *muwashshaḥāt* in contrast to the rigid form of standard classical Arabic poetry with its mono-endrhymed verses divided into two equal hemistiches. Since Arabic at this point had no terminology for divisions of a verse into anything other than two equal hemistichs or for the two contrasting sections of the *muwashshaḥ*, Ibn Sanā' al-Mulk, like all later medieval writers, had to devise his own vocabulary. He used the term *qufl* or *qafl* (pl. *aqfāl*) to designate the "common rhyme" section, that is, the section that retains the same rhyme each time it recurs. Although in modern Arabic the root q –f – l is usually found in words having to do with "locking" or "closing," one of the oldest senses of the verb is "to return from a journey" (see *Lisān al-'Arab*) and if it was used in the sense of "returning," the term might be more properly voweled *qafl.* In contrast, he used the term *bayt* (pl. *abyāt*) for the "changing rhyme" section, which has a different end-rhyme each time it recurs. Here, he has done us no favors, for the term *bayt* was already in use as the term for a standard one-line verse, and there is no easy explanation for why he chose such an ambiguous label. His third most important terminological innovation was to label a division within a single line of the "common rhyme" section a *juz'* (pl. *ajzā'*), literally a "part" or "partial unit," and a division within the "changing-rhyme" section a *fiqra* (pl *fiqar*), literally "passage" or "section." He apparently perceived the two alternating sections as so distinct that he used separate terms for the internal divisions within them.

After defining each of these new terms for his readers, he proceeds to demonstrate with examples, every *muwashshaḥ* structure that he had encountered. He starts with the "common rhyme" sections (*aqfāl*) and shows that he has found examples in which the common rhyme section is sub-divided into 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 8 "parts" (*ajzā'*), each of which is marked with a rhyme. It is important to note that he is very faithfully *describing* actual *muwashshaḥāt* and not simply listing all of the *possible* combinations. When he arrives at the point where he should have inserted an example with seven "parts" he instead says:

> The *muwashshaḥ* which is commonly known as "The Bride" [*al-'arūs*] would be an example of this, but it is in colloquial Arabic, and since the use of colloquial is not permissible in a *muwashshaḥ* except in the *kharja*, we will not cite it here.[65]

He does not assume that there must somewhere be an example of a common-rhyme section with seven rhymed sub-divisions, but rather informs us that he knows of only one such song, and because it is in colloquial rather than classical Arabic, he does not consider it a true *muwashshaḥ.*

He then turns to the "changing rhyme" sections and gives examples of poems that have seven different combinations of lines with internal rhymes (*fiqar*). All of this is rather mind-boggling when laid out schematically, one example after the other, but in this opening section of his treatise, it is precisely Ibn Sanā' al-Mulk's intention to bring some order to this chaotic assortment of forms. Grounded in the rigid, constant form of Arabic standard (*qarīḍ*) poetry, this jumble of different patterns must certainly have seemed bewildering, even overwhelming, to those who encountered them for the first time.

Ibn Sanā' al-Mulk then proceeds through various other features, carefully dividing *muwashshaḥāt* into binary categories. One of these classifications deals with the use of the poetic meters and/or rhyme-patterns of classical Arabic poetry (*awzān, s. wazn*): he states that some *muwashshaḥāt* adhere to these meters or patterns, but others do not:[66]:

> The second group is made up of those *muwashshahāt* in which there is no trace of the classical Arab meters/patterns [*awzān al-ʻarab*], and this group is the majority, by far the larger, a number so large it cannot be reckoned, and they are so irregular that they cannot be parsed precisely. I wanted to establish a metrical system for them that would be an aid in classifying them and a measure of their *awtād* and *asbāb* [units of prosody similar to English "feet"; lit. "pegs" and "cords"], but that turned out to be a difficult and impossible undertaking because they resist systematization and escape one's grasp. They have no metrical system but that of the music [*talḥīn*], no meter but that of the beat [*al-ḍarb*], no "pegs" [*awtād*] but the pegs [of the instruments], and no "cords" [*asbāb*] but [the instruments'] strings. Only with this [musical] prosodic system can one know a well-formed *muwashshaḥ* from an uneven one, a perfect one from a defective one.[67]

This passage includes a play on words where he uses terms both in their technical meaning in Arabic prosody and their more common everyday sense. A *watid* is both a unit consisting of one short plus one long syllable in poetry and also a "peg" in the sense of a "tent peg" or the "peg" of a lute. A *sabab* is both a short syllable in poetry and a "cord," such as a "tent rope" or the string of a musical instrument. The gist, however, is that the majority of *muwashshaḥāt* do not obey the rules of classical Arabic prosody or form, and one can only judge them by how well they fit their melody.

Ibn Sanā' al-Mulk reiterates this idea in a later passage, where he is discussing *muwashshaḥāt* whose meter/pattern is confused, raggedly woven:

> With this type of *muwashshaḥ* it is only with the measure of the music [*mīzān al-talḥīn*] that one can know a good one from a bad one, a whole one from a broken one. There are some that appear lame or even broken, but the music mends that which is broken, heals its illness, makes it healthy and whole again, and makes it smooth so that not a word disturbs.[68]

Thus, if read from the page, these *muwashshaḥ* texts would appear to be badly composed poems, with irregular meter, but when they are *sung,* the music erases any perception of irregularity. This implies several things from a musical standpoint. First, it seems clear that in many cases the lyrics have been composed to fit an existing melody. In addition, these melodies almost certainly included melismatic passages where a single syllable is held over several notes (cf. al-Fārābī's "empty notes"), which quite effectively overrides any underlying metric pattern. Ibn Sanā' al-Mulk, however, goes even further in a passage where he discusses songs where the lyrics fit the melody and songs where there are blank moments that have to be filled with nonce syllables, such as *la* or *na*:

> *Muwashshaḥāt* are in one other respect divided into two groups: those in which the text fits the music and requires no assistance in this, and this group includes the majority of *muwashshaḥāt*; and those in which the text does not fit the music and cannot be sung without being supported by syllables that have no meaning, as a prop for the melody and a crutch for the singer, such as in the following lyrics by Ibn Baqī:
>
> > *Man ṭālib // tha'r qatlā*[69] *zabayāt al-hudūj // fattānāt al-hajīj*
> > Who shall seek // vengeance for those slain by the gazelles in their litters // temptresses of pilgrims?
>
> The melody would not be correct without singing *lā lā* between the two parts ending in the letter *jīm* [i.e., between the words *hudūj* and *fattānāt*] in the common-rhyme section.[70]

Ibn Sanā' al-Mulk is obviously referring to "filler" or nonce syllables here (*lafẓa lā ma'nā lahā*) and not the Arabic for "No! No!" as in the translation by E. García-Gómez.[71] This is striking because the use of such nonce syllables is found in modern performances of Andalusi music throughout the Arab Middle East. It is also noteworthy that he divides *muwashshaḥāt* into two, and only two, categories: those with lyrics that fit their melody and those where the lyrics need to be supplemented with extra syllables. Ibn Sanā' al-Mulk is a meticulously descriptive writer and neither here nor anywhere else in his treatise does he mention a *muwashshaḥ* that is not sung. From beginning to end, he treats these lyrics as lyrics, not as poems, and he views the entire tradition as a musical one.

The passage above is remarkable in one other sense as well. When he writes that this lyric would not be correct without the insertion of the two nonce syllables, he assumes that his readers know this song and can "hear it in their own minds," otherwise his argument would make no sense. This implies that he sees himself as writing to a readership that is already familiar with this musical tradition and that when his readers replay the song in their minds, they will nod their heads in agreement.

Another passage gives us a key with which to unlock a critical piece of the *muwashshaḥ*'s musical structure. The author is praising compositions where the common-rhyme and changing-rhyme sections are different from other another in their "patterning" [*wazn*]. He gives an example where the two alternating sections have lines of very different length, and therefore the pattern of the rhymes is different as well (this is particularly obvious if one reads the text aloud). In the first section, the two-syllable rhymes occur on the eleventh and twelfth syllables, but in the second section, the single syllable rhyme occurs every fourth syllable. Ibn Sanāʼ al-Mulk sees this as a very laudable quality. At first it seems obvious that this is what he means by *wazn,* an ambiguous term that can mean "pattern," "model," "rhythm," "poetic meter," and "weight," among other things. However, he then adds some comments about music that make it clear that he is talking about something entirely different:

> There is another group of *muwashshaḥāt* in which the common-rhyme sections are different from the *wazn* of the changing-rhyme sections, which is clear to every listener and whose flavor is apparent to every person of good taste, such as the text of one composer:
>
> *al-ḥubbu yajnīka ladhdhat al-ʻadh**ali** // wa-lawmu fīhi aḥlā min al-qub**ali***
> *li-kulli shay'in min al-hawā sab**abu** // jadda l-hawā biyya wa-aṣluhu l-liʻ**abu***
> *wa-in law k**ān** // jaddun yugh**nī***
> *kāna l-ihs**ān** // min al-ḥus**ni***[72]
>
> *Love makes it a pleasure to be rebuked // To be blamed for love's sake is sweeter than kisses*
> *In love all matters have their reason // Love for me grows grave though it started in play*
> *But if there were // Luck that served*
> *There'd be mercy // From this beauty*
>
> Only those among the people of this art who are very well versed in this science are brave enough to attempt to compose this type of *muwashshaḥ*, and they deserve to be recognized as masters by their contemporaries. For when a newcomer to this table [i.e., a beginner] hears this *muwashshaḥ*, and sees the clear distinction between the *wazn* of the common-rhyme and changing-rhyme sections, he will think that this is acceptable for any *muwashshaḥ* lyric, and he will create something that is unacceptable, and which does not fit the music. His failure will become clear at the moment of performance, *for the singer on some instruments will have to change the tightness of the strings [i.e., will have to retune],* when moving from the common-rhyme to the changing-rhyme section and from the changing-rhyme to the common-rhyme section. This is something to be noted and remembered [Emphasis added].[73]

If it were not for the final comment about the moment of performance and the music, we might well interpret the term *wazn* here to mean the meter, the differing length of the lines, or the spacing of the rhymes. But when he says that musicians would have to retune their instruments, it becomes clear that he is talking about the *melody* of the song. Instruments would not have to retune if there were a change in poetic meter, or if there were a change in rhythm. They would only have to retune if there is a significant change in the melody: in other words, there are *two* melodies here, one for each section of the song. Here again, it seems that Ibn Sanā' al-Mulk is appealing to his readers' familiarity with this repertory and their ability to read the text and hear the tune in their heads.

What type of change in the melody would cause musicians to retune the strings of their instruments and why would they do so specifically between the changing- and common-rhyme sections? Since we have no notated medieval examples, we can turn to modern practice for a possible answer to these questions. Nearly all *muwashshaḥāt* in modern oral tradition consist of a binary musical structure of *two contrasting melodic units.* In the vast majority of *muwashshaḥ* songs, these two melodies alternate in lock-step with the alternation between the common-rhyme and changing-rhyme section of the lyrics. If we reexamine our diagram of a basic *muwashshaḥ* and add indications for the two melodies (x and y) on the right-hand side, the pattern becomes clear:

	Rhyme	Melody	
Common-rhyme	---------- ---------A	x	*Maṭla‘* (Opening verses)
	---------- ---------A	x	
	--------------- --------------B	y	
Changing-rhyme	--------------- --------------B	y	
	--------------- --------------B	y	
Common-rhyme	---------- ---------A	x	
	---------- ---------A	x	
	--------------- --------------C	y	
Changing-rhyme	--------------- --------------C	y	
	--------------- --------------C	y	

(etc.)

Every time the common-rhyme section returns with its A rhyme, the music returns to the first melody x; and every time the lyrics shift to the changing-rhyme section, the music also shifts to the second melody y, back and forth alternating between the two melodies. It is very common for the two melodic units to be based on different notes or "tonic centers." If the first melody starts and ends on the note C, for example, the contrasting melodic unit is often set a few notes higher on E or F or G, or a few notes lower, on A or B.

Of the string instruments, the lute was the most commonly used to accompany singing. Al-Fārābī noted that the lute was normally tuned in fourths, but that lute players also used other tunings, and in particular, they often tuned the lowest string to different pitches. In addition, as we have seen, al-Tīfāshī organized his catalogue of Andalusi songs according to modes that he tied directly to the tuning of the lowest string (*bamm*), that is, to the mode's tonic note. This is still common in modern times to allow the musician to play "drop notes" one octave below a key pitch, usually the tonic. It appears then, that Ibn Sanā' al-Mulk may be signaling that inexperienced composers might compose the two contrasting melodies in different modes, leading lute players to retune their lowest string. An additional possibility might be that if the contrasting melody were set on a different tonal center, a few notes higher or lower than the first melody, a lutenist might choose to retune the lowest string to an octave below that pitch, but this would, quite frankly, be a matter of choice and style, and not a necessity.

A second possibility is that he is referring to the *rabāb*, which, as we have seen, was tuned in a variety of different ways. There are no historical references to medieval *rabāb* players using what a modern string player would call "positions," that is, moving one's hand down the neck of the instrument to play higher and higher notes. If this technique were not available to them, then a *rabāb* player could conceivably be caught short when using the wrong tuning. Al-Fārābī says, for example, that one of the common tunings for the two-string *rabāb* was only one whole step apart, for example, C–D. If a musician were using that tuning and the first melodic unit used the notes C–D–F but the second melody jumped up to G and used the notes G–A–B–c, he would then conceivably be forced to retune the higher string to G.

The third string instrument that might plausibly have been involved would have been the *qānūn* or trapezoidal zither. Al-Fārābī does not discuss the *qānūn* individually in KMK, but rather deals with the class of all string instruments that are played with "open strings," including harps, lyres, and zithers.[74] He begins by noting that tuning these instruments is an entirely different process than tuning a lute, and requires that the musician have a good ear for "consonance" and "dissonance." He first provides a description of how to tune the strings to a common diatonic scale using 11 strings, which produces the octave plus three higher notes. In general, however, if a harp or *qānūn* were set in this standard tuning, certain shifts in the melody might require retuning. These, however, would not be a shift in the tonal center, as noted above with the *rabāb*, but rather shifts from one *mode* (or tetrachord) to another, for example, if one melody required a major third and the contrasting melody required a minor third or a neutral third (commonly referred to in Arabic as the "*zalzal* third").[75] All of this, however, is essentially guesswork, and exactly which string instrument(s) Ibn Sanā' al-Mulk had in mind, and what type of retuning, is not entirely clear.

The basic principle here, despite the awkward formulation, is unmistakable: the common-rhyme and changing rhyme sections had *contrasting melodies*. In later centuries, musicians in different regions of the Arabic-speaking Middle East, devised terminology for the *melodic* structure of the *muwashshaḥ*, that is, for the two contrasting melodic units.[76] One of the features for which they developed special terms was precisely for when the second melody was placed higher or lower than the first melody. Salīm al-Ḥilw, for example, says that the first melody of a *muwashshaḥ* is called a *dawr*, but the contrasting melody is called either a *khāna* or a *silsila*, and he explains the difference as follows: "For the most part, the *khāna* is in the higher notes of the mode [*maqām*] in which the *muwashshaḥ* is composed, and the *silsila* is the opposite, for it must be in the lower notes of the mode [*maqām*]."[77] Al-Ḥilw studied music in Cairo in the early 20th century with some of the great musicians and singers of the late 19th century. We cannot naively assume continuity over centuries, but it is highly suggestive that this characteristic, described in a rather ungainly fashion by Ibn Sanā' al-Mulk in the 12th century, is found throughout the Arabic-speaking Middle East in modern times, and that musicians at some later point devised technical terms that reflect this structure. This bipartite melodic structure is so pervasive, in fact, that it should probably be reckoned as one of the defining features of the genre.

One final passage by Ibn Sanā' al-Mulk poses a question that is not easily resolved. At the end of the passage discussed above where he states that most *muwashshaḥāt* do not use classical Arabic prosody and that (using the images of "pegs" and "strings") they can only be understood with their music, he adds an intriguing comment:

> Only with this musical prosodic system can one know a well-formed *muwashshaḥ* from an uneven one, a perfect one from a defective one. And most of these *muwashshaḥāt* are built upon the composition [*ta'līf*] of the *urghun*[78] and singing them to something other than the *urghun* is *musta'ār* [borrowed/false/artificial] but on its equal [*'alā siwāh*] is acceptable.[79]

He also tells us that he himself has never heard *muwashshaḥāt* sung to the *urghun*.[80] So what might this mysterious *urghun* be that he in Egypt has never heard, but which he believes is the foundation for the composition of those *muwashshaḥāt* that are not based on the classical Arabic meters? Lopez-Morillas has examined a number of possibilities and, I believe, rightly rejected the straightforward translation of the term as "organ," either in its small portative form or larger church-style form, and also the possibility that it refers to an *organistrum*, which was a type of hurdy-gurdy, for there is no evidence linking either of those instruments with Andalusi *muwashshaḥāt*.[81] The use of the term in its ancient Greek sense of "any musical instrument" also makes no sense here since Ibn Sanā' al-Mulk says he has never heard an *urghun*.

One possibility, however, is that *urghun* here refers not to a specific instrument, but to a performance practice, namely, singing in *organum*. As we saw in Chapter 7, singing in parallel octaves and fifths was already a widespread practice in Christian Iberia by the 11th century, although the supposed reference to *organum* being taught in Cordoba in that era is somewhat suspect.[82] Since we know that *muwashshaḥāt* were at times sung chorally, it is possible that groups sang with occasional passages (or whole songs) accompanied by a separate vocal line a fourth, fifth, or octave, above or below, supporting the main melody. Looking to modern practices in the Arab World, it is fairly common for the featured soloist in a performance of *muwashshaḥāt* to jump up a fifth or even an octave over the choir and sing a parallel line for parts of a verse or even full verses. This technique can be found in modern performances across the Arab Middle East from Morocco to Syria. Remembering that biographies of Ibn Sanā' al-Mulk state that he learned *muwashshaḥāt* primarily from a single Maghribī singer, this would be a technique that his informant could not demonstrate, but could only describe to him.

A second possibility suggests itself by working backwards from Ibn Sanā' al-Mulk's statements: What would be an instrument that he had never heard, but which was closely tied to Andalusi music and the singing of *muwashshaḥāt*? The obvious response would be the Andalusi *būq.* Multiple authors, even far from al-Andalus, wrote that it was the instrument most prized and most characteristic of Andalusi culture; however, it was completely unknown in Egypt. The problem then is to understand how the term *urghun* came to be used by Ibn Sanā' al-Mulk, or perhaps by his Maghribi informant, in place of *al-būq*. For everyone outside of al-Andalus, the term *būq* referred to a horn or trumpet, which is precisely why writers such as al-Tīfāshī and Ibn Khaldūn had to give detailed descriptions of it when writing for non-Andalusian readers. Therefore, it may be that Ibn Sanā' al-Mulk used the term *urghun* in the sense of "a musical instrument I am not familiar with." However, if we look at the *Vocabulista* of Pedro de Alcalá (1505), compiled in Granada immediately after its fall to Ferdinand and Isabella, we find the following three entries under *órgano*.[83]

Castilian	*Alcalá's transcription*	*Modern transcription*
Órgano instrumento músico	Mŭcica	mūsīqā
Órganos de plomo	Mŭcica min a raçaç	mūsīqā min al-raṣāṣ
Órgano qualquiera instrumento	Ĕlet a zămr	ālat al- zamr

> For Castilian "Organ, a musical instrument," the Arabic is simply "music"
>
> For Castilian "Lead-[Pipe] Organ," the Arabic is "music from lead [pipes]"
>
> For Castilian "Organ, any type of instrument," the Arabic is "a reed instrument"

It appears that at least for Andalusians of Granada in the late 15th century, the term *órgano* (presumably *urghun* in Arabic), referred primarily to a *reed* instrument (*zamr)*, which is exactly the terminology encountered in Ibn Ḥayyān's *Muqtabis* when he describes the emir Muḥammad's great love for *zamr*, which later in the passage turns out to be *al-būq*. In the description of the wedding in the streets of Cordoba, we are told the name of the *zāmir* (player) who was playing the *būq.* In these examples and elsewhere, forms of the Arabic root z – m – r are used in reference to playing, and players of, the *būq.* In addition, Ibn Sa`īd al-Andalusī reports that the physician, Yaḥyā ibn 'Abdallāh ibn al-Bahbada, composed *zajals* "that people sing to the *būq*" [*yughannūna bihā 'alā al-būq*]. The *būq* was clearly linked to singing *zajal*s, and presumably also *muwashshaḥāt*. Perhaps Ibn Sanā' al-Mulk's informant used the term *urghun* in his explanation of the Andalusi *būq,* meaning (in Andalusi usage) "a reed instrument," or perhaps Ibn Sanā' al-Mulk chose to use the term rather than attempt to explain this unfamiliar instrument, which he had neither seen nor heard, to his eastern readers.

Both of these solutions appear possible: a basic form of *organum* was certainly in use in 12th-century Iberia and Ibn Sanā' al-Mulk would not have been able to hear it if he were learning from a single Maghribi singer. Equally, the *būq* was very common in al-Andalus, but was not known in Egypt, and was associated with the singing of *zajal*s (and presumably *muwashshaḥāt* as well), so Ibn Sanā' al-Mulk would have had good reason not to refer to the *būq* because in Egypt that term referred to an entirely different instrument. Perhaps someday an additional source will come to light and provide a definitive answer.

Notes

1 Studies on modern traditions include studies on Libya (Ciantar 2012), Morocco (Davila 2013), Tunisia (Davis 2004), Morocco/Algeria (Glasser 2016), North Africa (Guettat 1980, 2000), North Africa & the Mashriq (Reynolds 2000), Syria (Shannon 2006), the Mediterranean region (Shannon 2015), and Yemen (Wagner 2009).

2 The bibliography of Heijkoop and Zwartjes 2004 lists 2,785 sources, many of which deal with the question of origins, and the quantity of publications has increased dramatically since then.

3 In doing so, I echo the sentiments of Liu and Monroe 1989: 6: "studying these exquisite works in isolation from their melodies is like studying a butterfly 'etherized upon a table.'"

4 Although there exists a modern folk-song genre in the Gulf region also called *ṣawt*, there is no direct historical connection to the medieval courtly *ṣawt* other than the shared name; indeed, its structure more closely resembles the *muwashshaḥ*/*zajal* strophic form. See Touma 1987: 141–2.

5 KA I: 3 – "I have placed at the beginning of every piece of poetry that has been set to music the term *ṣawt* as a sign and indication that clarifies what is part of the musical composition [*ṣan'a*] from what is not."

6 The term *ughniyya* (pl. *aghānī*), which in modern Arabic has become the common word for "song," was used less frequently in medieval texts, despite its appearance in the titles of works such as the *Kitāb al-Aghānī.*

7 For a brief history of early Arabic song books and their terminology, see Reynolds 2012: 73–88.

8 The 13th-century scholar Ṣafī al-Dīn al-Urmawī appended transcriptions of a handful of songs, sometimes termed "exercises," to his treatise on music theory, *Kitāb al-Adwār,* to demonstrate principles he discussed in the body of the text, discussed in Wright 1978: 216–69; see also Wright 1995 and Ṣafī al-Dīn 1984.

9 For the technical meanings of these terms, see Sawa 2015, which has been of invaluable assistance in creating these translations and the translations of other passages from KA.

10 For a detailed study of the concept of "composers" in medieval Islamic culture, see Neubauer 1997.

11 See Reynolds 2012: 79–81.

12 Terms used to describe taking the tune from an older song and setting new words to it included: *akhada laḥnan min ṣawtin* (he took a melody from a song), *allafa* (compose by "putting together"), *banā ʿalā* (built upon), *ʿamila ʿalā* (made upon), *sariqa* (stole), *mazaja* (mixed), etc. See Sawa 2015 for the precise meanings of these and other related terms.

13 For a collection of anecdotes describing various forms of *contrafactum* composition, see Sawa 2019: 82–92.

14 This four-verse lyric by the poet ʿUmar ibn Abī Rabī`a to a musical setting by Ibn Surayj was reckoned one of the three greatest Arabic songs ever composed in the list that forms the core of KA (see Chapter 1), see KA I: 60 ff, and was still being sung in the 13th century according to al-Tīfāshī, though it is unclear if he was referring to the setting by Ibn Surayj, that by Ibrāhīm al-Mawṣilī, or the newest setting by Ibn Bājja: al-Ṭanjī 1968: 98, 103; Liu and Monroe 1989: 36–7.

15 For a listing of the standard rhythmic modes (and their variant appellations), see Sawa 2019: 8.

16 See Sawa 2019: 30; Sawa 2015: 484–5; and Ibn Ṭaḥḥān 1990: fols, 45r-6v, 63v, for different *types* of *nashīd.*

17 *fa-amara al-Muntaṣir ʿArīb an tughannī nashīdan fī awwal al-abyāt wa-tajʿal al-basīṭ fī al-bayt al-akhīr.*

18 KA V: 172

19 KA V: 230; Cf. Sawa 2019: 73.

20 There are several variants in the mss. for the word *tasawwagha*, here translated "open up for me." See, KA V: 230, fn. 2; cf. Sawa 2019: 74.

21 KMK: 1069–1189; French translation, MA II: 53–100.

22 KMK 1070–1.

23 For aficionados of modern Arab music, this passage inevitably brings to mind the famous passage in the song *Huwa ṣaḥīḥ al-hawā ghallāb* [It's true that Love conquers all] as sung by Umm Kulthum in concert, where she often improvised for 15 seconds or more on the "n" of the word *naẓra* (a glance) before completing the phrase.

24 KMK 1099.

25 KA V: 427.

26 KA: V, 426–7.

27 This remains a common performance practice in the Arabic-speaking world to this day.

28 KMK, 505; MA I: 169; al-Ḥasan al-Kātib defines *ṣayḥa*/*ṣiyāḥ* as "the highest part/note of a melody" [*ashadd mawḍaʿ yaqaʿ fī l-laḥn*], and *sajāḥ* as the duplication of notes in the lower register, on the *mathlath* and *bamm* strings [*ṭabaqatuhu fī al-ʿūd al-mathlath wa-l-bamm*] 1975: 78; 1972: 122–3.

29 al-Ṭanjī 1968: 98–9, 102–3; cf. Liu and Monroe 1989: 36–7.

30 al-Ḥasan al-Kātib describes *hazza* as follows: "This is when a note shakes/trembles, for [when notes are sung], some tremble and others are steady and firm; at times it seems to the listener that notes are 'cyclical' [reverberate?] (*mustadīra*), and

some seem to be pushed back (*mardūda*) into the interior of the mouth," 1975 82; 1972: 127.

31 Ibn Bassām 2000: I, 362.

32 An interesting interpretation based on an emendation of the text, along with comparisons to eight earlier translations, can be found in Monroe 1985–6: 121–47.

33 For the various permutations of the name of the first creator of the *muwashshaḥ*, see Zwartjes 1997: 45–6; Rosenthal (Ibn Khaldūn 1958: III: 440) reads Muqaddam ibn Mu'āfā, but the Arabic edition (Ibn Khaldūn 1989: II, 767) gives Muqaddam ibn Ma'ārif.

34 Ibn Khaldūn 1989: II, 767–8; Ibn Khaldūn 1958: III, 440–2.

35 See Zwartjes 1997: 45, and Fierro 1994: 220–2, for a refutation of a *muwashshaḥ* that has been put forward as being from the 10th century.

36 For a more detailed description, see Stern 1974: 12–41.

37 For Ibn Bassām the common-rhyme section was a *markaz* and the changing-rhyme section was a *ghuṣn*; for Ibn Sa'īd/Ibn Khaldūn these were called a *simṭ* and a *ghuṣn*, which together formed a *bayt*; whereas Ibn Sanā' al-Mulk used *qafl* or *qufl* for the common-rhyme and *bayt* for the changing-rhyme and did not have a term for the two together. In later texts the term *dawr* was sometimes used to mean a complete stanza.

38 Stern's choice of the English term "prelude" for the *maṭla'* was unfortunate, for in western music a prelude is an instrumental, and not a vocal, genre, and this also gives the impression that the *maṭla'* was separate and independent from the remainder of the poem, which it certainly is not. See Stern 1974: 14.

39 My thanks to the leaders and musicians of the Aḥbāb Shaykh Larbī bin Ṣārī Association of Tlemcen, Algeria, for teaching me this *muwashshaḥ*.

40 Zwartjes 1997: 236.

41 Stern 1948 and 1974, particularly 35–41, 56–62, 123–57.

42 These are assembled and studied in Zwartjes 1997; see also Compton 1976: 59–112; and Monroe 1977.

43 Jones 1988; for Arabic *muwashshaḥāt* reliably attributed to Andalusi poets, see 'Inānī 1980.

44 Yelles-Chaouche 1990: 233

45 Ibid., 285.

46 Compare Zwartjes 1997: 188–252, with Yelles-Chaouche 1990: 218–392.

47 The earliest western scholarship on Hispano-Arabic strophic poetry were the publications by Hartmann 1897 and Brody 1894–1920. Rosen 2000: 178–85 provides a useful history of this early scholarship.

48 For a detailed review of these and other theories, see Zwartjes 1997: 5–65, 84–124.

49 Corriente 1989 and Monroe 2017.

50 As scholars have pointed out, however, even Ibn Quzmān did not use colloquial Arabic throughout all of his poetry, and some passages are very close to standard Arabic.

51 See Stoetzer, "Zadjal," EI2.

52 Alvarez 2009.

53 Stern 1974: 53–6. Somewhat oddly, Stern immediately adds that many of the *zajal*s of Ibn Quzmān have both the structure of a *muwashshaḥ* and possess a *kharja*.

54 Monroe is an exception here and has repeatedly pointed this out in several of his publications; see, for example, Monroe 1988–9: 25–6.

55 The most important studies of *Dār al-Ṭirāz* include Hartmann 1897, García-Gómez 1962, Compton 1976, and editions of the Arabic texts by al-Rikābī 1977 and ʻInānī 2001, along with the biographical study of Ibn Sanā' al-Mulk by Naṣr 1967.
56 See Dajani-Shakeel 1999.
57 All page numbers are from *Dār al-Ṭirāz*, ed. Jawdat al-Rikābī, 2nd ed (1997) and E. García-Gómez "Estudio del <Dār at-Tirāz>" (1962); cf. Rikābī, 30; García-Gómez, 30–1.
58 For a discussion about whether *muwashshaḥ* poetry was recited or sung, see Monroe 1987.
59 Ibn Sanā' al-Mulk 1977: 53.
60 al-Ṣafadī 1962: 27, 230.
61 Ibn Sanā' al-Mulk 2001: 9; Ibn Abī ʻUdhayba cited in Raḥīm 1987: 134.
62 Ibn Sanā' al-Mulk 2005.
63 This phrase is quoted from a poem by al-Mutanabbī, see Ibn Sanā' al-Mulk 2005: 122, fn. 8.
64 Quoted in Naṣr 1967: 139; see variant text, Ibn Sanā' al-Mulk 2005: 122.
65 Ibn Sanā' al-Mulk 1977: 35; García-Gómez 1962: 36
66 Ibn Sanā' al-Mulk's use of the Arabic term *wazn* fluctuates in meaning, referring at different times to melody, rhyme-scheme, and poetic meter. For a detailed analysis, see Reynolds *forthcoming*.
67 Ibn Sanā' al-Mulk 1977: 46–7; García-Gómez 1962: 54–5
68 Ibn Sanā' al-Mulk 1977: 50; García-Gómez 1962: 60.
69 Although some sources cite *qatlī* rather than *qatlā*, I agree with al-Rikābī's reading, for it is surely the maidens who slay (male) pilgrims with their arrow-like glances and not the poet who has slain the maidens. An alternative, though more awkward, reading would have *qatlī* mean "their killing of me."
70 Ibn Sanā' al-Mulk 1977: 50–1; García-Gómez 1962: 60–1.
71 García-Gómez may have been misled by a latter passage in this poem where the syllables *do* mean "No, no!"
72 It is not clear whether the interior rhyme -*ān* was sung as I have transcribed it here (emphasizing the rhyme), or if it was sung with full inflection *law kāna / al-iḥsānu.* In classical Arabic prosody -*na* and -*nu* do not rhyme, despite the preceding long *ā* that constitutes a rhyme for most western ears. Modern traditions include many songs where some words are sung with full inflection and others not, per the dictates of the melody.
73 Ibn Sanā' al-Mulk 1977: 48–9; García-Gómez 1962: 56–8.
74 KMK 822–73; MA I: 286–304.
75 A qānūn player would normally handle such shifts by applying pressure on the string with the thumb to raise the note, as was still the case until the early 20th century before metal levers (*ʻurab*) were introduced, see Berner 1937: 27. There was not, however, a comparable technique for *lowering* a note.
76 See al-Faruqi 1975: 1–29; al-Faruqi confusingly refers to "three" melodic units in her article, but then states that the "third" unit is simply a repetition of the first melody, which is used to close the song (21). See Reynolds 2018: 49–50.
77 al-Ḥilw 1965: 87.
78 Although I have transcribed the word as *urghun,* the voweling for /' – r -gh – n/ is in fact not known; see, for examples, the various entries in the indices to Shiloah 1979 and 2003 under "Instruments: aerophones."

79 *Wa-aktharuhā mabniyyun ʻalā ta'līf al-urghun wa-l-ghinā' bihā ʻalā ghayr al-urghun mustaʻār wa-ʻalā siwah mujāz*. Ibn Sanā' al-Mulk 1977: 47; García-Gómez 1962: 55.

80 Ibn Sanā' al-Mulk 1977: 53; García-Gómez 1962: 61.

81 Lopez-Morillas 1985.

82 Stevenson 1960: 23–4 – the phrase in question is written in a different hand and appears to have been added at a much later date.

83 The *Vocabulista* was compiled in Granada in the years following its fall to Ferdinand and Isabel and was first published in 1505. Its musical vocabulary has been studied by Zayas 1995.

9 Hebrew *muwashshaḥāt*

By the 10th–12th centuries, the vast majority – some estimates are as high as 90 percent – of the Jewish population of the world lived in al-Andalus and the Maghrib, under Muslim rule, and spoke Arabic as their mother tongue.[1] As a result, the musical culture of medieval Iberia's Jewish communities was remarkably rich and has left an enduring imprint on Jewish musical traditions, especially Sephardic traditions, to this day.[2] One of the most remarkable developments of this historical period was the revival of Hebrew, which had not been used as a language of everyday communication for many centuries, as a secular literary language, and in particular, as a language for secular poetry and song.[3] Arabic poetic meters, forms, and themes, as well as grammatical ideas such as the "root" system and the arrangement of dictionaries, were adapted to fit Hebrew over the course of the 10th and 11th centuries, although not without some opposition. One of the prominent figures in this process was Dunāsh ben Labrāṭ (920–90).

Dunāsh was born in Fez, traveled to Baghdad where he studied with one of the most famous scholars of the age, Saʿdiya Gaon (882–942), and then traveled to Cordoba where he entered the intellectual circles patronized by the great Jewish courtier and scholar, Hasday ibn Shaprūṭ (ca. 920–ca. 970).[4] He is generally recognized as a key figure in the adaptation of Arabic poetic metrics to Hebrew, the promulgation of the "root" system with which all Semitic words are organized by their three-consonant root letters, and as the foremost promoter of composing Hebrew secular poetry based on the models and themes of Arabic poetry.[5] A glimpse of the elite social context of this Arabized Hebrew secular poetry is found in the introduction to one of his poems in a manuscript from the Cairo Genizah (Cambridge T-S 8/T 15/8):

> Another song by Ben Labrat, of blessed memory, of the genre of wine drinking at evening and morning with rhyme and in the *khafīf* [Arabic] meter to be accompanied by musical instruments, by the singing of birds on the trees and by the scent of diverse perfumes, and all these he describes in a party at [the court of] Ḥasdai [Ibn Shaprut] *Ha-sfaradi* (the Andalusian), may he rest in peace, and said, "Do not sleep" – a voice said: "Drink an aged wine …"[6]

These are indeed some of the most common tropes in Arabic wine poems, but of particular note for our purposes is the phrase, "to be accompanied by musical instruments." The idea of singing this poem to music is found not only in the superscription, but also in the poem itself:

> A voice said, "Do not sleep! / Instead drink agéd wine!
> Amid camphor and lilies / frankincense and aloes
> Amid pomegranates, / date palms and grapevines
> Amid tender young plants / and tamarisk trees
> Amid warbling flutes[7] / and murmuring lutes
> On the lips of singers / with harps and lyres.

The composition of Hebrew secular poetry based on Arabic models was thus well underway before the emergence of the new *muwashshaḥ*/*zajal* form in the 11th century, but the new strophic poetry rapidly became extremely popular among Jewish poets. Many of the major Jewish literary figures of the era composed Arabic *muwashshaḥāt* and the genre was quickly imitated in Hebrew, which is one of the reasons that some of the most important texts about the musical performance of the *muwashshaḥ* are to be found in Jewish sources, written in both Arabic and Hebrew.

The earliest Hebrew *muwashshaḥāt* appear to have been composed in the mid-11th century. Two Hebrew examples preserved in the Cairo Geniza are attributed to the great poets of that century: Samuel Ha-Nagid of Granada (993–ca.1056) and Solomon ibn Gabirol (d. ca. 1060).[8] The collection of Samuel Ha-Nagid's poetry that was compiled by his son, Joseph ben Ha-Nagid, includes an indication that his *muwashshaḥāt* were performed *musically*: "I included in this *diwan* his metered writings and songs in diverse meters that used to be sung in front of him."[9] Solomon ibn Gabirol was not only among the earliest Jewish composers of *muwashshaḥāt*, but also appears to have been the first to use the *muwashshaḥ* form for devotional purposes, well before the emergence of Arabic religious *muwashshaḥāt.*[10]

In an oft-cited letter written by Yehudah Halevi (ca. 1075–1141), only 17 years old at the time, to his future mentor, Moshe Ibn Ezra (ca. 1060–1139), he describes one of the experiences he had while traveling from northern Christian Spain south to Granada. On one of his stops along the way, he was invited to join a group of poets in a wine-drinking gathering, who were passing the time singing *muwashshaḥāt* and challenging each other to compose *contrafacta* imitations. A particularly ornately rhymed song was one that Joseph ibn Zaddiq (d. 1149) had composed in Hebrew based on an Arabic original by Abū Bakr al-Abyaḍ (d. ca. 1130). The guests tried one after the other to create a *contrafactum* of Zaddiq's Hebrew *muwashshaḥ,* but failed. Eventually they turned to their young guest and dared him to try his hand at it. Here is Halevi's account:

> I was forced into composing a song [*ve-etḥakema le-naggen*] in the drinking gathering of gifted poets. The model of their song [*neginatam*,

> lit. "their melody"] was a composition by the Prince of the Armies and the opening of the poem was *Lel maḥshevot lev a'irah.* They could compose a good song [*heitivu nagen*, lit. "they were competent in composing a good melody"] for the beginning but could not finish it. They turned to me with boastfulness saying: "See, they started it, you finish it."[11]

He goes on to recount his triumph and includes the texts of the poems in his letter. As Seroussi notes, "What stands out in this passage is the loaded musical terminology employed by Halevi, which would allow one to conclude that the mastery of setting the words to the melody was a crucial task for the poet."[12] Even more remarkable is that Halevi's song was later imitated by Abraham Ben Ezra (d. 1164), who set devotional lyrics to the melody for use in the morning service.[13] Thus, a secular Arabic *muwashshaḥ* by al-Abyaḍ was the basis of a secular Hebrew *muwashshaḥ* by Ibn Zaddik, from which Yehudah Ha-Levi created another secular Hebrew song, from which Abraham ibn Ezra later created a devotional song for para-liturgical use in the synagogue. All four poems were clearly set to the same melody, and, critical for our understanding of Arabic *muwashshaḥāt*, without this letter from Ibn Ezra, we would have no record of al-Abyaḍ's *muwashshaḥ* being a song, rather than just a poem to be recited. Thus, similar to the examples cited in Ibn Sanā' al-Mulk's treatise, we see that Arabic *muwashshaḥāt* frequently circulated in written form with no indication that they were sung, and it is only in ancillary documentation such as *Dār al-Ṭirāz* or this account in Yehudah Ha-Levi's personal letter to his future mentor, that the musical nature of the text becomes clear.

The process of *contrafactum* composition was already common in the courtly music of Medina, Damascus, and Baghdad, noted clearly in the performance indications attached to songs in the *Kitāb al-Aghānī,* as well as in in al-Fārābī's detailed instructions on how to set words to a given melody or the reverse in KMK. Fleischer argues that this may also already have been common among Hebrew poets of the East in the earliest periods of the para-liturgical *piyyut* songs.[14] The practice of citing the earlier melody for which a new text had been composed became particularly widespread in al-Andalus, and continued on for centuries in the Jewish communities of North Africa: "From the earliest manuscripts of Hebrew strophic poetry from Spain there are references (in the form of superscriptions) to existing songs."[15] These attributions typically took the form of the phrases *fī wazn* ["on the pattern of"] or *fī laḥn* ["to the tune of"] followed by the opening words of the original song. On reflection, this seems a rather natural development in a society where nearly every educated person was well versed in the art of poetry, but where far fewer individuals were competent at composing new melodies.

As we have already seen, *wazn* was used by Ibn Sanā' al-Mulk to mean melody, albeit somewhat awkwardly. Ulf Haxen has argued, however, using primarily Jewish sources, that the term *fī wazn*, when used in a caption for strophic poetry, should be understood to "indicate a rhythmic quality or mode [as opposed to a quantitative meter] rather than a succession of notes, a scale or a melody."[16] Similarly, Amnon Shiloah argued that this phrase indicated only that the "meter or rhythm (*wazn*) is the same as that of the song [cited]."[17] There are, however, many instances where this is demonstrably not the case, and Seroussi is certainly correct in asserting, "It is clear that from the 11th century on, captions like these appearing in Spanish Hebrew poetry in Al-Andalus and employing almost invariably the term *laḥn* referred to a melody in both its rhythmic and melodic aspects."[18] As Samuel M. Stern stated already in his 1950 dissertation, "There is small doubt that here the main stimulus to imitation lay in the musical side of the *muwashshaḥ*. We have seen the great role music played in the popularity of the genre. Each poem had its particular tune; melody and text formed a close unity. It was but natural that there should arise the wish to use for one's own poems melodies that had already acquired popularity."[19] Indeed, by the 13th century, al-Tīfāshī was complaining that the last prominent figure to compose new poems to new music was Ibn Bājja, and that audiences in his day would only listen to new texts if they were set to well-known tunes, and to new tunes if they carried well-known lyrics:

> Modern poems are sung among [the people of the Maghrib] only when their melody matches that of an old poem that has previously been set to music. Even then they sing them only rarely, at the request [of a listener], and instead sing these [modern] poems, or similar ancient poems, [only] when they have been set to old melodies.[20]

This tendency to rely on *contrafactum* composition seems only to have intensified in later centuries.

Beyond providing very significant information about the musical nature of the *muwashshaḥ*, Jewish sources also contain some of the very limited knowledge we have about performance practices. Hebrew texts of *muwashshaḥāt* found in the Cairo Geniza nearly always included either the first few words of the opening section of the poem [*maṭla'*] or the term *pizmon* at the end of each strophe. The latter was apparently a newly coined term and was glossed in the 13th century by Tanḥūm Yerushalmī as follows, in Stern's translation:

> [This word] is extensively employed in writing down sayings and *muwashshaḥ*s. At the end of every strophe one writes "*pizmon*" … And in the terminology of the *muwashshaḥ,* when the person reciting [*qā'il*] has finished each verse, those present answer him with the *maṭla'*, which is the first verse of the composition … The *maṭla'* is termed *pizmon* ("refrain") because it is given as a response as the reciter ends each strophe.[21]

Although the term *qā'il* can mean "recite," it also covers a variety of different meanings include "to say," "to compose poetry," and "to sing." Stern's translation oddly leaves out one important detail. The phrase that he has translated "is termed *pizmon* because it is given as a response" is, in the original Arabic: "*yusammā pizmōn li-kawni yunshadu wa-yujāwabu*." The verb *yunshadu,* which often means "to sing," has been omitted and invites a much more musical interpretation, such as: "because it is *sung* in response."[22] Although this text is from Egypt, it seems unlikely that this practice would have evolved separately from performance practices in al-Andalus. In any case, this passage offers us our first glimpse of listeners or a chorus singing a true "refrain" during performances of a *muwashshaḥ*, for although the "common-rhyme" sections returns with the same rhyme in each strophe, this is not a true refrain since it does not include the same words, only the shared rhyme.

The possible widespread practice of repeating the *maṭla'* as a refrain has further implications for our understanding of the *muwashshaḥ* as a musical genre. We have seen that the two melodic units of a *muwashshaḥ* song alternate in step with the contrasting sections of the poetry. Using as an example a standard five-stanza *muwashshaḥ* rhymed aa bbb aa ccc etc., aa (although many different patterns are possible), this means that the first melody would be heard by the audience 12 times, and the contrasting melody 15 times during a single song. However, if the *maṭla'* is also sung as a refrain in between each strophe, then that melody would be heard over 20 times in the performance. In addition, in some modern traditions, the melody is repeated after each sung verse in an instrumental response termed the *jawāb*, and in some performances a soloist sings the verse alone, after which the musicians sing the verses as a chorus, and that in turn is followed by the instrumental *jawāb*, which results in dozens of repetitions of the melodies in a single performance. Factoring in that the same melody might well have been used for several songs in circulation in a given region and era, it is certainly understandable that audiences would grow to know and love the tunes, be able to sing the refrains, and quite possibly many of the other words of the text. This may well be the basis of Ibn Khaldūn's assertion about *muwashshaḥāt*: "[they] were appreciated by all the people, both elite and the masses, due to the ease of understanding them and the familiarity of their style."[23]

Perhaps the most famous commentator on music in the medieval Jewish tradition is Maimonides, whose various opinions have long attracted scholarly attention.[24] Leaving aside the much debated question of whether Maimonides was entirely or only partially against various forms of sung and instrumental music, these passages offer valuable evidence about the social context of the singing of *muwashshaḥāt*. Born in 1135 in Cordoba, he traveled at a young age first to Fez, then to the Holy Land, and eventually settled in Cairo. In one of his Arabic works, he refutes the opinion of many religious scholars that at wine parties and weddings the singing of Arabic *muwashshaḥāt* was objectionable, but singing Hebrew *muwashshaḥāt* was acceptable. Maimonides argues quite simply that it is not the *language* of a song that is objectionable or not, but its content. If one song arouses lust and incites shameful behavior and another contains praise of courage, generosity and virtue, the former is reprehensible and the latter commendable, regardless of what language they are in. Maimonides here offers us a depiction of both Arabic and Hebrew *muwashshaḥāt* being performed at Jewish wine parties and weddings.

As Monroe has pointed out in his analysis of this text, however, there is an additional detail that is highly significant for the study of Iberian strophic poetry in a phrase where Maimonides is contrasting two lewd songs: "If one of these two *muwashshaḥ*s is in Hebrew and the other is in either Arabic or in *'ajamiyya,* why then listening to, and uttering, the one in Hebrew is the most reprehensible thing one can do in the eyes of the Holy Law."[25] Given that Maimonides began writing this text when he was in al-Andalus and the Maghrib, and finally completed it in Cairo, the usual translation of the Arabic term *'ajamī* as "Persian" makes no sense in this context, and almost certainly refers to "Romance." Is this a reference to the Romance and/or bilingual *kharja*s? Or, as Monroe argues, is it an indication that the Romance *kharja*s were themselves "refrains taken from more extensive lost Mozarabic songs that were strophic in nature"?[26] Until additional evidence comes to light, the question will have to remain unanswered.

Another text by Maimonides provides one of the earliest references to the practice of preceding the singing of a series of *muwashshaḥāt* with an instrumental "overture." The commentary in question is on Mishnah Arakhin II:3, which deals with the musical instruments used in the Temple during sacrifices in pre-diasporic times. Maimonides first provides glosses for the ancient instruments by referring to contemporary instruments such as the lute, the *mizmār*, and the reed flute. He then mentions a musical piece [*mahaliq*] that is played by the instrumentalist [*mezammer*] before the singer [*menaggen*] begins to sing to the accompaniment of the lute [*'ūd*] and notes that this instrumental "prelude" is called *al-tūshiya* in Arabic. Although other scholars deemed this a copyist's error, Seroussi contends that the word *al-tūshiya* is "clearly readable in Maimonides's autograph."[27] This is a remarkable discovery for the *tūshiya* continues to be an instrumental prelude in the performance of Andalusi music in parts of modern North Africa. Given the very strong bias toward vocal music in medieval Arabic sources, this also constitutes one of the earliest references to an *instrumental* genre of music in the Arab Middle East.

Conclusion

The earliest stages of development of the *muwashshaḥ/zajal* remain obscure. Some scholars have approached the question from the standpoint of rhyme and point to various experiments with multi-rhymed poetry in Arabic and in Hebrew or to the popularity of "rhymed prose" (*saj'*) as precedents.[28] Other scholars have focused on the question of poetic meters and tried to demonstrate how the unruly wording of many *muwashshaḥāt* might be derived from the classical Arabic meters. Still others have focused on the enigmatic *kharja*s and argued for a development from a preexisting rhymed strophic Romance oral poetic tradition or an emergence from the bilingual cultural context of al-Andalus. Some scholars believe the genre to have been musical from its earliest inception and others see these as poems that were composed and recited (non-musically) like other Arabic poetry and circulated primarily in written form, which were only *post hoc* set to music. To the best of my knowledge, no one has offered a precedent or explanation for the striking binary structure of the *muwashshaḥ* with its alternating sequences of long and short verses. Many of the most vociferous arguments for a single origin (Romance! Arabic! Hebrew! Berber!) are but thinly disguised efforts to claim credit for one ethnicity or another, one religious group or another, and seem to be rooted primarily in politico-cultural conflicts of much later centuries. In the final analysis, it is likely that many or even all of these processes contributed certain characteristics to the emergence of this rather complex form. Most cultural phenomena do not have single points of origin and are rather the products of "complex genealogies;" and few musico-literary forms are more likely to have emerged from a complicated series of cultural interchanges than the *muwashshaḥ*.

What can the *musical* dimensions of the *muwashshaḥ/zajal* song-form tell us about its development? We have seen that the Arabic historiographic tradition tends to assign innovations to specific individuals and that almost all of these attributions are found in texts composed a century or two after the death of the individuals cited. It would seem wise then to take similarly late attributions of the first *muwashshaḥ* with similar skepticism, since there is no corroborating evidence from contemporaneous sources.

We are on much surer ground when we speak of *muwashshaḥ* compositions from the 11th century, and from that same period we have references to *muwashshaḥāt* as *musical* compositions, both in the introduction to the compiled poetry of Samuel Ha-Nagid and in the famous letter of Yehudah Halevi (both cited above). In the 12th century, Ibn Sanā' al-Mulk offers not only irrefutable evidence of the musical nature of the *muwashshaḥ*, but also a clear reference to the two-part musical structure of the genre that is found in the vast majority of *muwashshaḥāt* in modern oral traditions scattered throughout the Arabic- and Hebrew-speaking Middle East. However, he also offers documentation of *muwashshaḥ* lyrics being sent in letters (i.e., in non-musical form), demonstrating that both forms of transmission were taking place.

It seems clear that the *muwashshaḥ*, as a musical phenomenon, was a stark break from the courtly *ṣawt* tradition. The *ṣawt* was a dramatically melocentric genre where very short texts were set to extremely complicated melodies and were performed by highly trained professional musicians. Indeed, their technical skills and ability to compose new songs reinforced and guaranteed their value and status at court. This was not a genre or style that could be performed by the untrained masses, nor were there refrains or moments where listeners could "sing along" with the performer. The *muwashshaḥ* on the other hand, was everything the *ṣawt* was not. It featured comparatively lengthy texts, ornamented with a dazzling array of rhymes that helped make the texts easy to memorize. The two-melody strophic structure meant that each melody was heard numerous times and was therefore easily learned, and was sung in a much less elaborate style that very much *did* allow listeners to learn refrains and sing them during performances.

It may have been precisely this *musical* dimension that caused them not to be collected into the *dīwān*s (collected poems) of poets, for they were composed in an entirely different medium. When Ibn Bassām says that he is not including ‘Ubāda’s *muwashshaḥāt* because they are not part of the scope (*gharaḍ*) of his work since most of them are not composed in “the meters [*a‘ārīḍ*] of the (ancient) Arabs,” he is of course telling the truth. For, as Ibn Sanā’ al-Mulk wrote and others have observed, the majority of them were composed to fit *melodies* rather than *meters.* It is possible that some scholars found the ubiquitous pounding rhymes objectionable (as many literary critics find the thumping cadences of modern English limericks). However, *shi‘r* (classical poetry) had been defined by Arab authors for centuries as an utterance that is both metrical and end-rhymed, and since many *muwashshaḥāt* were not completely metrical, they clearly were therefore not *shi‘r*.[29] Moreover, those who did not include *muwashshaḥāt* in their compilations may also have been perceived them as being completely separate because they were composed to be *sung.* In our own times, the “collected works” of famous authors often do not include film scripts along with their novels, short stories, and poetry, presumably because a film script, separated from the film itself, does not feel like “literature.” Perhaps poems composed as *contrafacta* to be sung, felt similarly not like “poetry” to medieval scholars.

If somehow Ibn Sanā’ al-Mulk’s treatise had become separated from the collection of 69 *muwashshaḥāt* (34 by Andalusi poets and 35 of his own composition) to which it was attached, we would have no clue that these poems were *songs set to music and sung in performance.* Similarly, the *muwashshaḥ* by al-Abyaḍ that was the basis for the *contrafactum* by Ibn Zaddik and then by Yehudah Halevi, appears in Arabic compilations without any indication that it was sung, and it is only from the Hebrew sources that this is ascertained. These examples should caution us to keep an open mind about whether the many Arabic *muwashshaḥāt* that are known to us from later collections such as *Tawshī‘ al-tawshīḥ*—Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn al-Ṣafadī (1297–1363), *‘Uddat al-jalīs* – ‘Alī ibn Bishrī (dates unknown; d. after 1375), *Jaysh al-tawshīḥ*—Lisān al-Dīn Ibn al-Khatīb (d. 1397), and *‘Uqūd al-la’āl*—al-Nawājī (1386–1455), may also have circulated in musical form. This is particularly true since nearly all compilations of *muwashshaḥāt after* the 15th century are explicitly labeled as songbooks, with musical markings indicating the rhythms and modes of their settings.[30]

Were the very first *muwashshaḥāt* composed as songs? Given the uncertainty about the genre’s origins, it is impossible to say. If they were not, then we would have to hypothesize that at some point, someone read or heard a *muwashshaḥ* recited, and rather brilliantly conceived of the idea of setting it to music, and also came up with the unique idea of setting it to a musical structure utterly different from that of the courtly music of the day. So perhaps the appropriate question is not, "Who composed the first *muwashshaḥ*?" but "Who created the musical form of the *muwashshaḥ*?" The idea of alternating back and forth between two melodies is not an extraordinarily complex one, so it may have come from almost anywhere. Amazigh (Berber) music in modern times possesses many "call-and-response" forms that might have contributed this idea. We know almost nothing about folk-song traditions among Arabic-speaking or Romance-speaking populations of Iberia so it might have come from either population, and Jews in the Eastern Mediterranean possessed strophic forms that traveled to Iberia. In the end, it is most likely that *muwashshaḥ/zajal* song-form emerged from the interaction of different poetic and musical traditions, rather than springing from one single source.

The new strophic song-form did not, however, immediately displace the more prestigious *ṣawt* tradition, and for at least a few more centuries the highly trained *qiyān* and profesional male singers of al-Andalus continued to transmit and perform the elite tradition that had its roots in the musical cultures of Medina, Damascus and Baghdad.

Notes

1 Gerber 1994: xxiv.
2 The most important overview is found in Seroussi 2007. I am deeply indebted to Seroussi's scholarship and his personal assistance for much of what appears in this section. See also, Anglés 1968.
3 Although Hebrew had retained its role as a liturgical language, it had been replaced in everyday life in successive waves by Aramaic, Greek, Latin, and Arabic.
4 His teacher, Sa'diya Gaon, was well-versed in Arab music and wrote on a number of different musical topics, see Farmer 1943; rpt. 1997: I, 573–695.
5 For Dunāsh's adaptation of Arabic metrics to Hebrew, see Valle 1988; see also, Maman 2009: 91–3, and Maman 2004.
6 Seroussi 2007: 13; see Valle 1988: 195–9; and Dunash ben Labrat 1947: 64.
7 For the translation of Hebrew *tzinnorim* as "flutes" (*chirimia* in Spanish), see Valle 1988: 197.
8 Stern 1974: 78.
9 Seroussi 2007: 11.
10 Rosen 2000: 175.
11 Seroussi 2007: 19; the "Prince of the Armies" has been identified by Fleischer as Joseph ibn Zaddiq, see Fleischer 1986/87: 898–900, 902 ff.
12 Seroussi 2007: 19; see also Fleischer 1986/87: 901 and notes 19 and 22 for the role of music. For an analysis of the contents of the poems, see Rosen 2000: 173–4.
13 Rosen 2000: 174.
14 Quoted in Seroussi 2007: 16.
15 Seroussi 2007: 16.
16 Haxen 2001: 92.
17 Shiloah 2003: 109
18 Seroussi 2007: 16, see also Reynolds 2012: 82, for a discussion of the Haxen-Shiloah interpretation.

19 Stern 1974: 45.

20 [*yughannā ʿindahum fī l-shiʿr al-muḥdath idhā wāfaqa ʿarūḍuhu ʿarūḍ shiʿr qadīm yulaḥḥan, wa-qallamā yughannūn fīhi maʿa dhālika illā nādiran wa-bi-iqtirāḥ muqtariḥ, wa-innamā yughannūn fī hādhihi l-ashʿār al-madhkūra aw mā ashbahahā min al-ashʿār al-qadīma al-mulaḥḥana al-talḥīn al-qadīm*], al-Ṭanjī 1968: 102; a slightly different translation is found in Liu and Monroe 1989: 37. Although the term *ʿarūḍ* normally means "poetic meter," in the context of this passage it seems clearly to indicate here not just the meter but also the tune, as Monroe notes. Al-Ṭanjī remarks that in the original manuscript this passage appears to have been struck out by the author, al-Ṭanjī 1968: 102.

21 Stern 1974: 17.

22 Cf. Liu and Monroe 1989: 17, n. 54.

23 Ibn Khaldūn 1989: II, 767*: li-suhūlat tanāwulihi wa-qurb ṭarīqihi.*

24 Farmer 1933 [rpt. 1997: I, 547–2]; Idelsohn 1944 [1929]); Monroe 1988–9: 19–32; Seroussi 2002: 126–35.

25 Adapted from Monroe 1988–9: 20.

26 Although I am uncertain about Monroe's claim about the Romance *kharja*s (25), I fully agree with his identification of *ʿajamī* with Romance in this passage.

27 Seroussi 2002: 134.

28 Fleischer, in particular, has argued for the existence of a precursor of the *muwashshaḥ* form with two different rhymes in a single strophe in some of the songs of Saʿdiya Gaon and in earlier piyyutim. His arguments and proof-texts have unfortunately not been incorporated into the broader discussion because they have not yet been translated from Hebrew. See Fleischer 2010: I, 119–264. My thanks to Edwin Seroussi and Tova Beeri for bringing these essays to my attention.

29 Ibn Rashīq (d. 1063 or 1071): "Rhyme is the partner of metre in being a marker of poetry: one does not call it poetry unless it has a metre and a rhyme," qtd. in van Gelder 2012: 175.

30 See Reynolds 2012: 82–6.

Section Five

Post-Umayyad Iberia (11th–17th c.)

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10 The era of the “petty kings,” Almoravids, and Almohads (11th–12th c.)

The final collapse of Umayyad rule in 1031 ushered in a period referred to as the era of the “petty” or “factional” kings (*mulūk al-ṭawā’if*) during which al-Andalus splintered into as many as 30 different principalities, many of which were not much more than city-states.[1] This splintering of political authority was associated, however, with an astonishing florescence in literature, poetry, and music, which has prompted comparisons to the vibrant rivalry among the city-states of the northern Italian Renaissance. In the realm of poetry, for example, Nykl declared the 11th century to be “a period of unsurpassed brilliance” and Henri Pérès dedicated one of his most important works to the literature of this era.[2] This century counted among its luminaries many of the most famous literary figures of al-Andalus including Ibn Ḥazm (994–1064), author of the famous love manual *Ṭawq al-Ḥamāma* [*The Neck-ring of the Dove*]; Samuel Ha-Nagid (993–after 1056), the Jewish poet and vizier of the kingdom of Granada; the poet Ibn Zaydūn (1003–71); the princess-poetess Wallāda (994–1091); the poet and early composer of *muwashsḥaḥāt*, ‘Ubāda ibn Mā’ al-Samā’ (2nd half 10th c.–d. after 1030); al-Mu‘tamid ibn ‘Abbād (1040–95), the poet-king of Seville; Solomon ibn Gabirol (1021–70), the Jewish poet and philosopher; the poet Ibn ‘Ammār (1031–86); and ‘Abd Allāh ibn Buluggīn (1056–after 1090), the last Zirid ruler of Granada and author of a remarkable family history-cum-autobiography, among others. Throughout the 11th century the emirs of these small principalities competed in the pomp and finery of their courts, providing multiple potential sources of patronage for poets, philosophers, religious scholars, historians, and musicians. Their divisions, however, ultimately proved their undoing, for they were unable to resist the arrival of the Amazigh (Berber) Almoravids (1090–1146) and their successors, the Almohads (1147–1212), from North Africa or the military advances from the increasingly unified Christian forces in the north.[3]

Among the various manifestations of this cultural efflorescence was what might be termed a “Golden Age” of locally trained Andalusi *qiyān.* In the early centuries of Muslim rule, nearly all *qiyān* had been imported from the East, often dubbed “Medinese” by dint of their training in the musical center of Medina. Beginning in the 9th century, however, many female slave musicians and singers were also trained in Cordoba; in Ibn Ḥayyān’s biography of Ziryāb, for example, we find the names of over 30 female slaves whom he trained, though only their "stage names" are recorded, which unfortunately offer no information about their origins or ethnicities.[4] With the collapse of the Umayyad regime of Cordoba, several of the emirs of the newly emerging city-states began vying with each other in the acquisition of the most beautiful and most talented *qiyān.*

There is a fascinating description of a garden gathering and musical performance recorded by a traveler who stopped in Malaga in the early 11th century,[5] which had recently been incorporated into the newly founded Zirid *Ṭā'ifa* kingdom of Granada.[6] The anecdote not only provides a marvelous description of the type of drinking party often depicted in the lyrics of Andalusi poetry, but also obliquely documents the passing of power from the centralized court in Cordoba, here represented by the figure of al-Manṣūr (Sp. Almanzor), the chamberlain (*ḥājib*)who seized power from the young caliph Hishām II, and became the de facto ruler of al-Andalus from 978 to 1002, to that of the new *Ṭā'ifa* kingdoms:

> I was in Malaga in 1015, and at one point I fell ill for a long period. I was unable to go out and remained confined to my room, so two companions of mine nursed me and took care of me. When night came I was unable to sleep, and the sound of lutes and *ṭunbūr*s and *mi'āzif* [harps or zithers] echoed from every direction, mixed with voices singing. This added to my discomfort and pain, and I loathed hearing that playing and singing with all my heart and soul. I wished I could have found a place to stay where I would not hear any of it, but this was impossible given the propensity of the people of that neighborhood [for music and singing]. One night I lay awake after having dozed off in the early evening, and the awful singing and raucous music grew quiet. Suddenly all I could hear was some soft, sweet, beautiful music. It was pleasing and calming, and I did not find it distasteful, as I had found the other music. It slowly grew louder and I followed along, listening attentively, until it reached its climax. I so enjoyed it that I forgot my pain, and a sense of contentment and *ṭarab* overcame me. It seemed to me that the floor of the room rose up and the walls were spinning round me. Throughout all this I could not hear any singing [only instrumental music], and I said to myself, "This playing is exquisite, if only I could hear the voice of the player, and know where this playing will lead." Immediately the voice of a female singer [*jāriya*] began to sing verses in a voice fresher than flowers after a light rain and sweeter than the pleasant cooling of the fiery heart of an ardent lover. I could not control myself and rose while my two companions slept. I opened the door and began to follow that voice, which was somewhere nearby. From inside the house where I was staying, I looked out over a spacious dwelling, in the middle of which was a large garden. There, about twenty men were drinking, lined up with wine and fruit, and singing-girls were standing there holding lutes and *tunbūr*s and other musical instruments,

> as well as *mizmār*s [oboes/wind instruments], but not playing them. One singing-girl was sitting apart with her lute in her lap, and everyone was gazing at her, listening intently as she sang and played. I stood where I could see them but they could not see me, and every time she sang a verse, I memorized it, until she had sung a number of verses and then stopped. I returned to my room, and – may God be my witness! – I was cured. It was as if I had never been in pain. I memorized the verses and they are:
>
> *Take, O Shamūl, these full glasses of wine*
> *Give them to me, and do not ask about the consequences.*
> *Rouse this lonely man with your melodies; for the wine has*
> *the power of a king over the sufferings of this tormented one.*[7]
>
> The next morning, I went out and happened to meet a knowledgeable friend of mine from Cordoba who was living in Malaga. I told him what had happened, recited the poetry to him, and described the house, at which point his eyes filled with tears. "That is the house of the vizier so-and-so and the Baghdadi singing-girl so-and-so, one of the best singers of al-Manṣūr ibn Abī ʿĀmir. She was sold to that vizier after the death of al-Manṣūr and the fragmentation of his kingdom. The poetry is by Muḥammad ibn Qarlumān[8] about Saʿīd ibn Abī Qindīl al-Ṭunbūrī, with whom he was deeply in love. "Then why does he mention *Shamūl* in these verses?" I asked. "Shamūl was one of al-Manṣūr's Slavic slaves [*saqāliba*] and was handsome. When [Ibn Qarlumān] sang this poem to al-Manṣūr, and told him who the verses were about, al-Manṣūr said, "Use the name Shamūl instead of Saʿīd." He therefore used to sing it that way, and the singing-girl did the same when she sang it, as her [late] master had insisted."[9]

Thus, this Baghdadi *qayna* had once belonged to the powerful al-Manṣūr, and after his death had been sold to the vizier of the kingdom of Granada. The poetry had originally been composed by Ibn Qarlumān about one Saʿīd al-Ṭunbūrī. Since the appellation *al-ṭunbūrī* literally means "the *ṭunbūr* player" and the final verse of the poem refers to "your melodies," Saʿīd may have been a musician in al-Manṣūr's court. Upon hearing the song, however, al-Manṣūr insisted that the name be changed to that of a handsome young Slavic attendant in his entourage. Whether he ordered the change because he felt it was unseemly to be singing such poetry about a free man, possibly a musician, or as a compliment to Shamūl, or perhaps enjoyed the play on words, since *shamūl* means "wine that is fresh or cool to the taste," it is impossible to say. Presumably the author's friend, originally from Cordoba, became teary-eyed at this reminder of the passing of Cordoban glory, which had been sacked by Imazighen (Berbers) two years earlier, in 1013.

Another anecdote offers a glimpse of *qiyān* being trained in a private, domestic setting. It is found in the biography of the Chief Judge of Cordoba, Abū Muḥammad ibn Daḥḥūn (d. 1039): A friend stopped by his home for a visit, and was surprised to hear a woman singing nearby. He asked Ibn Daḥḥūn whether he should not make a complaint, supposing the singing to be coming from a neighbor's house. Instead the judge responded ruefully,

> It is [coming from within] my own house, indeed it is my wife, for she is a wealthy woman who purchases slave girls, raises them, and teaches them singing. I am a poor man, my wealth has gone, and I am not able to support myself; so she takes care of me and clothes me, and in this way things are made easier for me.[10]

It is remarkable to see that female slaves were being trained in singing within the homes of the well-to-do, but even more so that the teacher and slave-owner was the wife of the chief judge of Cordoba. Had she herself perhaps at one point been a *qayna*? Or is this an indication that even free women of the upper classes were at times musically trained? In this particular case we cannot know the answer, but this account confirms that the buying, selling, and training of *qiyān* also took place outside of the rarefied environs of the caliphal court. [See Figure 13]

Ibn Bassām's *Dhakhīra* includes a number of anecdotes that indicate that *qiyān* in al-Andalus were sometimes skilled in remarkably diverse fields, including not only the performing arts, but also the physical sciences, Qur'anic recitation, and even weaponry. Hudhayl ibn Razīn (d. 1044/5), the founder of the short-lived Banū Razīn dynasty who ruled the small city-state of Sahla (known in Spanish as Albarracín, from the dynasty's name) in Aragon from the fall of Cordoba to the arrival of the Almoravids from North Africa, was one such enthusiast. Ibn Bassām quotes his earlier counterpart, Ibn Ḥayyān, to the effect that Hudhayl was handsome, well mannered, a good companion, manly, and unmatched among the emirs of al-Andalus in his eloquent speech. He was also among his peers the prince who spent the most money on purchasing musical instruments, clothing, and *qiyān*, to the point that he was criticized by other princes for the high prices he was willing to pay, perhaps because by doing so he drove up the market. In one case, he is said to have paid the extravagant sum of 3,000 dinars for a single *qayna*, whom he purchased from a certain Ibn al-Kattānī (about whom, see below):[11]

> She was unique among the *qiyān* of her age. She had no peer in her class, no one had seen a woman more cheerful, more gracious of movement, gentler of gesture, sweeter of voice, better in singing, more excellent her in writing, more skilled in calligraphy, more refined in manner, and more possessed of all that is good and could be desired. She was free from grammatical error in all that she wrote or sang, with a thorough knowledge of medicine, and her conversation extended even to natural history, the anatomy of the internal organs, and other things about which even many of those who claim to be specialists in those fields do not know well.

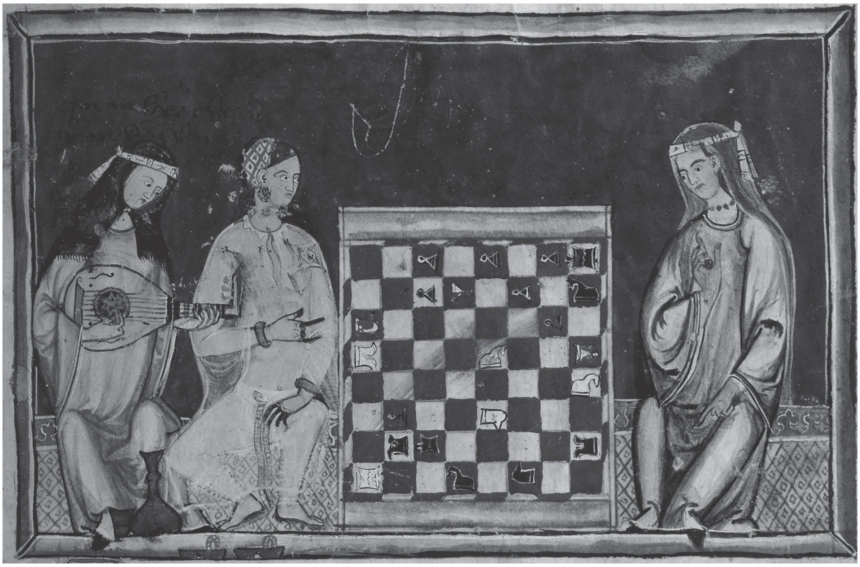

Figure 13 *El Libro de Ajedrez* (13th c.), two Moorish women, note the henna-dyed hands, play chess, accompanied by a young woman playing a lute, possibly a *qayna.*

> [Her skills included] wondrous movements in the art of swordsmanship, including sparring with leather shields and fencing with swords, spears, and sharpened daggers, and other entertaining pastimes. In this, no one had ever heard of any who was her like, her equal, or her match. To complement her, Hudhayl purchased many beautiful female slaves, famous for their Qur'anic recitation, whom he sought from every direction. His *sitāra* [orchestra] was the most glorious of all of the "petty kings" of al-Andalus. I was told that he accumulated 150 concubines and 60 male castrated Slav servants, the likes of whom had never been assembled by any of his peers.[12]

It is unclear whether the passage about her skill with weaponry is a description of true sparring and fencing, or of a form of dance performance involving weapons, such as is found in various regions in the modern Middle East.[13] Henri Pérès found it difficult to believe that *qiyān* were ever trained to recite the Qur'an and therefore emended the word *tajwīd* (Qur'anic recitation) to *tajrīd,* translating this as some sort of armed combat.[14] However, in Chapter 5 we encountered Bazī'a, who was nicknamed "the Imām" due to the beauty of her Qur'anic recitation, and an anecdote from al-Humaydī demonstrates that *qiyān* continued to be trained in Qur'anic recitation. The female slave in this account was probably trained in Medina and brought to al-Andalus as a member of the household of her owner:

> A man from the Mashriq known as al-Shaybānī arrived in al-Andalus and settled in Cordoba on the banks of the river at al-'Uyūn. The chief judge, Ibn Salīm, went out one day on an errand and a rainstorm overtook him, forcing him [to seek shelter]. So he guided his mount into the entryway of al-Shaybānī and halted there. Al-Shaybānī welcomed him and bid him to dismount. He did so, and al-Shaybānī ushered him into the house and the two of them spent some time talking. Then al-Shaybānī said to the judge, "My God grant the judge prosperity! I have here a Medinese singing girl – nothing sweeter than her voice has ever been heard – and if you permit it, I will have her recite for you a section from the book of God – Exalted and Almighty – and some verses of poetry. The judge replied, "Go right ahead." Al-Shaybānī called for the singing girl and she recited [Qur'an] and then sang [verses of poetry]. The judge was gratified and greatly pleased with this. In his sleeve he had some dinars, so he took them out and placed them under the cushion he was sitting on, though al-Shaybānī did not notice this. When the rain let up, the judge mounted and said farewell to al-Shaybānī. Then the judge called out to him and the singing girl saying, "I left something there, and it is for the singing-girl, to help her with whatever she needs." Al-Shaybānī exclaimed, "God be praised! [meaning, "You didn't need to do this"]." But the judge replied, "You have no choice but to accept it – I have sworn that you will do so." When al-Shaybānī went back into the house, he pulled out the purse and found twenty gold dinars inside![15]

When purchasing additional *qiyān* to complement the extraordinary female singer described above, it therefore seems much more likely that Hudhayl ibn Razīn acquired beautiful female slaves skilled in Qur'anic recitation than in the martial arts. The description above of the extraordinary *qayna* whom Hudhayl ibn Razīn purchased from Ibn al-Kattānī is presented by Ibn Ḥayyān and quoted by Ibn Bassām as credible. Ibn Bassām elsewhere, however, describes this particular slave merchant as a bit of a scoundrel and even a charlatan:

> Muḥammad Ibn al-Kattānī al-Mutaṭabbib[16] was unique in his time, a "sly dog" of his era, a seller of *qiyān* in the market, who would teach them Qur'an and classical Arabic and other things from the literary/courtly arts. He used artful means and was given to frequent use of all manners of skillful lies and falsehood. He would on occasion compose treatises and attribute them to *qiyān*, whom he then sold at a higher price. In the entry on Ibn Razīn, we mentioned that he sold him a *qayna* for three thousand dinars, according to what Abū Marwān [Ibn Ḥayyān] recounted. There is

a passage on a scrap of paper by Ibn al-Kattānī in which he describes how he taught his *qiyān*:

> I am capable of calling forth [intelligence] from stones, to say nothing of what I can do with dullards and ignoramuses! Consider that I have in my possession four Christian women who were but yesterday ignorant, and now are learned and wise, schooled in logic, philosophy, geometry, music, skilled in the use of the astrolabe, in astronomy,[17] astrology, grammar, prosody, literature, and calligraphy. The proof of this for those who do not know them are the large collections that have appeared in their script on the meanings of the Qur'an, its unique vocabulary, and other topics in the field of Qur'anic studies, as well as the sciences of the Arabs in the rising and setting of the stars,[18] prosody, grammar, and books of logic and geometry, and all the remaining types of philosophy. They mark with grammatical case-endings everything that they copy, and they correct [the text] according to its meaning, during their careful revision. This is the greatest testimony that I am indeed unparalleled in my era, one of a kind; I have exhausted this epoch of experience and this era of enlightenment. So recognize my rank – may God bless you! – and give me my due, and do not hope of finding an expert like me, or one endowed with my qualities, even if you should travel the horizons, inquire of all your friends, walking all the way to Iraq, [searching] alleyway by alleyway.[19]

Clearly this is a case of hyperbole, but it is significant that he is boasting about the scholarly merits of these *qiyān* – the breadth of their knowledge and education – rather than their looks, their voices, or their musical talents. The accusation that he composed treatises himself and passed them off as the writings of his *qiyān* only makes sense if there were indeed a market for female slaves who had such skills and he could conceivably earn more money through this subterfuge. Apparently, men of the upper classes were eager to purchase such educated female slaves, even if they later discovered that the slaves did not possess all of the qualities that had been advertised. The focus here on the *intellectual* achievements of *qiyān* rather than merely their physical beauty and musical talent is noteworthy, for it appears that the value of these women could be increased through literacy, education, and the mastery of fields that were normally studied only by men. It was certainly not the average "singing-girl" who was educated in the sciences and could be a copyist and corrector of texts – let alone be skilled in the crafts of weaponry – but these accounts offer evidence that at least some female slaves had the opportunity to develop scholarly skills, and that their owners had motives (financial, among others) to allow them do so.

Qiyān as captives and gifts

Qiyān often figure in the Arabic texts of the 11th and 12th centuries as gifts sent and received by rulers and also as captives in this period that was marked by frequent skirmishes and campaigns along the northern borders of al-Andalus. One incident that has acquired a certain notoriety when it comes to the role that *qiyān* played in intercultural exchange is the siege and capture of Barbastro in 1064. Muslim forces had barricaded themselves within the walled city and were besieged by Christian forces from different regions led by several prominent foreign figures, including Duke William VIII of Aquitaine, the Norman Robert Crispin, and William of Montreuil, fighting alongside the local Catalan troops. Several historians have referred to this campaign as the "First Crusade," based upon an interpretation of a phrase in the key Arabic account that attributes a significant role in promoting this conflict to Pope Alexander II (1061–73); however, this interpretation has more recently been contested.[20] At some point the underground conduit that brought water to the city became blocked by a boulder, though it is not clear if this was done on purpose by the Christian forces or occurred naturally. The lack of water forced the city, with its civilian population and fighting men, to surrender, which led to a series of massacres that is described in lurid detail by chroniclers, including scenes of Christian soldiers raping virgins in front of their fathers and wives in front of their husbands.[21] Ibn Ḥayyān, as quoted by al-Maqqarī, wrote that the wealth seized by the Christians in goods and captives was beyond reckoning, and that the portion of the booty of but one of the Christian leaders included around 1,500 "female slaves" (*jāriya*), and, after describing the slaughter in some detail, adds that, "When the king of the Christians resolved to go home, he chose thousands from the virgin daughters of Muslims, the beautiful women, and handsome boys, whom he took with him to give as gifts to his overlord (*man fawqahu*)."[22] Amatus de Montecassino, who was primarily interested in the role of the Norman forces led by Robert Crespin, briefly mentions the capture of Barbastro in his *Historia Normannorum,* written between 1080 and 1083, but does not mention female captives.[23]

Although the Arabic term used by Ibn Ḥayyān, *jāriya*, can at times mean a female slave singer, it most often simply refers to a female slave or servant, so those historians who have quoted this passage translating the term as "singing-girls" are probably mistaken, and the assessment that of this large number of female captives "most became lute-playing singers and concubines in the courts of southern France," is almost certainly an overestimation.[24] However, it does seems likely that this large body of female captives would have included at least a few trained *qiyān*, and it is therefore possible that some of them ended up in the households of various nobles in northern Spain and southern France. Duke William VIII of Aquitaine, one of the most prominent figures in this campaign, would have received a number of these female slaves as part of his share of the booty in 1064, seven years before the birth of his son, William IX, who is frequently referred to as "the first Troubadour." Thus, as Boase has suggested, it is possible that William IX not only grew up in a household that included Andalusi female singers, but also, since his father passed away when he was only 15, that he became master and owner of some of those singers some 20 years before composing the first of his famous songs.[25]

Although Amatus of Montecassino does not mention female captives in his account, Andalusi women do figure in his narrative. After the city's fall, he writes, "The [Christian] knights gave themselves over to the love of women," which, he says, so angered Christ that He allowed the Muslims to retake the city the following year.[26] There is an echo of this accusation in the Arabic sources. Ibn Ḥayyān concluded his account of the dreadful slaughter at Barbastro with a poignant anecdote that shows that Christian knights did in fact possess an appreciation for the musical arts of these female slaves and well-to-do women.

A Jewish merchant went to Barbastro after the siege seeking to ransom the daughters of one of the nobles who had been able to escape the slaughter and were being held as part of the booty seized by a Christian count. The merchant recounted the following tale:

> I went to his house, asked permission to enter, and found [the Christian] seated as if he were the lord of the house, stretched out on the cushions, parading about in the rightful owner's most costly clothes, with the sitting room and sofa exactly as the owner had left them on the day of his misfortune, with all the furnishings and decorations unchanged. The owner's servant girls, with their hair pulled back, stood around him serving him. The Christian greeted me and asked my business, and I explained the situation to him.

The Jewish merchant attempts to negotiate a price, but the Christian shows him that along with the house and its womenfolk, he has acquired chests of jewels and precious cloth, so no ransom price would be enough to convince him to part with the young women. He swears that even if he did not possess such wealth, he would not free the nobleman's daughter for he wished to make her the mistress of his household. "This is what her people did to our womenfolk during their reign, but the tables have turned and now it is time for us to take revenge." At this point the Christian calls to one of the girls and orders her to sing for them. She picks it up a lute, tunes it, and then, with tears running down her cheeks, sings a poem which the Jewish merchant does not understand, and the Christian even less so. To the merchant's great surprise, however, the Christian appears deeply moved by her singing, as if he were experiencing the deep emotional response of *ṭarab*. Resigned to the fact the Christian would not give up his captives for any price, the Jewish merchant leaves without being able to buy their freedom.[27] Given the number of sieges, captures of cities, and raids that occurred during the 11th and 12th centuries, situations such as this must have taken place innumerable times, whether or not they included the household of Guillaume IX of Aquitaine.

The example of an anonymous singing-girl who was given as a gift by Yūsuf ibn Tāshufīn, leader of the North African Almoravids, to al-Muʿtamid ibn ʿAbbād, the ruler of Seville (r. 1069–91) ends in even more tragic manner. The story is quoted by al-Maqqarī from the *Mushib* of al-Ḥijārī (1106–55):

> The Commander of the Faithful, Yūsuf ibn Tāshufīn, gave al-Muʿtamid a singing slave girl who had been raised in North Africa [*al-ʿudwa*] and the people of North Africa of course hated the people of al-Andalus. He brought her to Seville. There were many rumors that the Sultan of the "Veiled Ones" [= Ibn Tāshufīn] was planning to wrest the Ṭawā'if kingdoms from [the Andalusians] and this thought occupied the mind of Ibn ʿAbbād.[28] So he took her out to the al-Zāhir Palace on the river in Seville, and he sat down to have some wine. She came upon the idea of singing the following verses to him once he had become intoxicated:
>
> *They carried the hearts of lions between their ribs,*
> *Their turbans coiled around faces shining like moons.*
> *On the day of the tumult, they girded themselves with Indian blades,*
> *Sharper than fate when unsheathed.*
> *If they frighten you, you will encounter every misfortune,*
> *But if they grant you safety, you will be allowed to flee.*
>
> In his heart it seemed to him that she was speaking of her [former] masters and he could not contain his rage, so he threw her into the river where she drowned.[29]

We can only wonder whether al-Muʿtamid understood the singer's intent correctly. Was she singing verses about bravery in battle with no particular implied message, or was she in fact using the moment of performance to assert her pride as a North African and her disdain for Andalusians, as the compiler implies?

Only one of the Andalusi singer biographies found al-Umarī's *Masālik* is devoted to a *qayna* from the court of al-Muʿtamid. After the usual praise of her beauty there is an anecdote in which al-Muʿtamid had decided to move all of his concubines from one town to another. He gathered them together and they travelled at night, his concubines like the "rising stars" beneath the star-filled night sky. He sent his *qayna*, Suʿdā, two verses of poetry about this night journey asking her to set it to music, which she did. A second anecdote begins with the text of one of her most famous songs and then recounts the story behind it, in which al-Muʿtamid had gone to visit a favorite concubine, but found her ill and feverish. He stayed attentively with her and later suggested to Suʿdā that she set to music verses by the 8th-century Baghdadi poet al-ʿAbbās ibn al-Aḥnaf about a sick lover, for, the anecdote concludes, "al-Muʻtamid was constantly suggesting verses to his *qiyān* for them to set to music."[30]

The court of al-Muʻtamid of Seville was, in any case, a flourishing center for music and poetry. He himself was an excellent poet, and both he and his son al-Rashīd were known as patrons of musicians, female slave singers, and *sitāra*s (orchestras of female slave musicians and singers).[31] As a result of negotiations seeking military support for a venture in Murcia from Ramon Berenguer II, Count of Barcelona (r. 1076–81), al-Rashīd was held hostage in the court of Barcelona as collateral until al-Muʻtamid made a payment of some 30,000 dinars.[32] It seems possible that the presence of a gifted Andalusi poet and musician may have led to some evenings of poetry, music, and wine.

The more famous, and somewhat mysterious, connection between the court of al-Muʻtamid of Seville and the Christian North, however, is the story of a woman known as "la mora Zaida" in Spanish, presumably from the Arabic title of respect, *sayyida* [lady, mistress]. Although referred to in some Christian sources as al-Muʻtamid's daughter, more recent scholarship from Arabic sources seems to have clarified that she was in fact his daughter-in-law, widowed at the death of his son, Abū l-Fatḥ al-Ma'mūn.[33] It appears that a politically motivated marriage with Alfonso VI of Castile was negotiated, and Zaida was sent north. Before the marriage could take place, however, the North African Almoravids had deposed al-Muʻtamid in 1091, and incorporated the *ṭā'ifa* of Seville into their empire. As a result, no political advantage was to be had from a marriage to Zaida. However, she seems to have attracted Alfonso's affection and remained as his mistress/concubine, possibly having converted to Christianity and taken the name of Isabel. In 1093, she gave birth to a son, Sancho Alfónsez, who was Alfonso's only male offspring. In 1100, Alfonso VI was once again widowed, for the third time, but scarcely five months later, on May 14, he suddenly appears with a new wife, by the name of Isabel. Soon after this, Sancho begins to co-sign official documents with his father as heir apparent to the throne. It therefore seems probable that this Isabel was the former Zaida, for it would have been difficult, if not impossible, to negotiate and contract a foreign marriage-alliance in less than five months, and this seems the most reasonable explanation of how Sancho was suddenly elevated to the status of heir apparent. Unfortunately, Sancho was killed during the Battle of Uclés in 1108. Had he survived, Castile and León might have been ruled by a king whose Andalusi mother was (at least originally) Muslim and Arabic-speaking.[34] Although we do not have many personal details about Zaida, as the wife of a poet-musician and with a famous poet and patron of music as her father-in-law, there is a good possibility that she herself was a musician, and even more likely that when she traveled north to the court of Alfonso, she had musicians and/or female slave singers in her entourage.

Although it is difficult to know exactly when, at some point the center for training female slave singers shifted from Cordoba to Seville, which had long been known for its musical activity. In Chapter 4, for example, we noted al-Shaqundī's work praising al-Andalus that included a list of musical instruments that could be heard in Seville, which for him was the most musical among the cities of al-Andalus. Ibn Rushd, known to the Latins as Averroes (1126–98), famously compared the cities of Cordoba and Seville with the following *bon mot*: "If a scholar in Seville dies, they send his books to Cordoba to be sold, and if a musician in Cordoba dies, they send his instruments to Seville to be sold."[35] Ibn Khaldūn, as well, notes the rise of Seville as the musical center of al-Andalus: "Music filled Seville to the point of overflowing, but moved on to the Maghrib and Ifrīqiya when her prosperity declined."[36]

The 13th-century Tunisian writer al-Tīfāshī confirms this assessment of Seville as the center of musical life in al-Andalus in his era, and offers a remarkable description of the training and sale of *qiyān*:

> Among the cities of al-Andalus, this music is primarily located in Seville where
>
> older skilled women singers teach singing to female slaves whom they own, as well as to hired, mixed-race [*muwalladāt*] female servants. These girls are sold from Seville to the various rulers in the Maghrib and Ifriqiya. A singing-girl is sold for a thousand Maghribi dinars, sometimes more, sometimes less, according to her singing, not her face, and she must be sold with a document that lists what she has memorized, and most of these [songs] are among the poems that we have mentioned above. Some of these are "light" songs that are good for the beginning of a performance, and others are "heavy" songs that a skilled performer only sings at the end [of a performance], such as "The Chestnut Stallion Complained"[37] and "The Palm Tree and the Palace,"[38] for these songs and others like them are only sung by experts. For that reason, they are considered obligatory for the sale, and the lack of such songs [in her repertory] would necessarily lower the price. Among the Andalusians a singing slave girl must also be skilled in calligraphy. She must submit the document listing what she has memorized to someone who makes sure that it is all in good Arabic. Her buyer reads what is in her document, indicates what he wishes to hear, and she sings it for him on the instrument specified in her bill of sale. She might also be skilled on all of the different instruments, as well as all forms of dance and shadow-puppetry, and possess her own instruments and her own servant-girls who accompany her with percussion and wind instruments, in which case she is known as "complete" and is sold for several thousand Maghribi dinars {for ten thousand dinars or close to that}.[39]

This passage offers a number of insights into the world of female slave singers. First of all, similar to situations documented in KA, older female singers [*ʿajāʾiz muḥsināt*] spent the latter part of their careers, buying, training, and selling young female slaves [*jawārī mamlūkāt*]. It is not entirely clear what is meant by the phrase *wa-mustaʾjirāt ʿalayhinna muwalladāt*, here translated as "hired mixed-race female servants": if the contrast is on "hired/salaried" [*musta'jir*] rather than "owned" [*mamlūk*], then this may indicate that women who were not fully owned by the older singers, perhaps belonging to other households, were also being trained in music and singing. This would parallel the situation we have already seen in the households of Ibrāhīm al-Mawṣilī and Ziryāb, both of whom took in and trained students owned by wealthy individuals. The term "mixed race" here might refer to girls born to Arab fathers and slave mothers and raised in Arabic-speaking households.[40]

What is completely new here, however, is the description of a document [*daftar*] that served as an official record of a singer's skill on different musical instruments and list of her repertory, and the description of "auditioning" a singer by asking her to perform. Though originally from Tunisia, Aḥmad al-Tīfāshī traveled east and eventually settled in Cairo. Thus, like so many of the authors of our most important sources about the history of al-Andalus (al-Maqqarī, al-Ḥumaydī, Ibn Diḥya, and others) he wrote for an Eastern readership. His phrase, "among the Andalusians a *qayna* must also be skilled in calligraphy," may therefore imply that this was not a skill common among *qiyān* in the Mashriq, but it also clearly echoes the texts cited above describing Andalusi *qiyān* who were highly literate and trained as copyists. Interestingly, he mentions that a *qayna* might have to submit her "register" to someone who could correct her Arabic, if this were faulty, implying perhaps that even in the 13th century, *qiyān* in al-Andalus were still being acquired from non-Arabic speaking communities. Particularly worthy of note is the description of a "complete" [*mukmala*] *qayna* who was purchased along with her own accompanists. In other words, in passages in other historical texts that state that a nobleman or an emir purchased a *qayna*, this may in fact mean that he purchased a small ensemble in which the *qayna* was the lead singer and instrumentalist.

Dance and puppetry

Al-Tīfāshī also provides one of the few medieval Arabic discussions of the arts of dance [*raqṣ*] and puppetry [*raqṣ al-khayāl*].[41] Although the manuscript is at numerous points illegible, and many of the verses of poetry he cites are indecipherable, his basic classification is clear. He divides dance [*raqṣ*] into two main types: the first is dancing performed by humans with the whole body, and the second is when images or figurines are made to dance [*tarqīṣ*] (i.e., puppetry). Dancing with the whole body is further divided into four types: plain dancing (in which the dancer uses no props); dancing mounted on play horses [*kurraj*]; dancing with swords, balls, glass bottles, ropes, or castanets made of black wood [*shīzā*]; and, dancing by stamping the feet.

There are also four types of dancing with images or figurines: The first is performed by puppeteers hidden behind a curtain with ornate puppets fashioned to imitate all manner of people dressed in their appropriate costumes, and are made to dance to the accompaniment of music and singing. The puppets are manipulated by "hairs" which are invisible to the spectators, and this art is highly appreciated in al-Andalus and the Maghrib, but, the author complains, he has found no verses of poetry or passages in prose that describe or praise this art-form.[42] The remaining three forms are listed with no explanation or description: shadow puppetry [*khayāl al-ẓill*], performances of "faces on a ball" [*wujūh ʿalā kurra*], and performances by dancers who are seen from behind a curtain [*min warāʾ al-sitāra*].

Al-Tīfāshī's short discussion provides a glimpse of the many various types of entertainment that *qiyān* and other artists performed in the courts of al-Andalus, some of which, as mentioned above, included or were accompanied by music and singing.

Music among the elite

In contrast to the many anecdotes that feature *qiyān* from this period, there are remarkably few references to professional male singers. Quite a few prominent scholars, authors, and noblemen, however, are cited in biographical compendia as having been skilled musicians and/or having composed works on music; unfortunately, almost none of these works has survived. The information provided in these accounts is often nothing more than a single phrase or sentence, but the aggregate picture is enough to document that men of the intellectual elite continued to study music, sing, compose, and occasionally write treatises about music during this period:[43]

Abū l-Ḥakam al-Bāhilī (1093/4–1155), a physician and poet, is cited as a lover of music and a talented player of the lute [BA I: 150 (48)].

Abū ʿUthmān al-Ḥammār of Zaragoza (fl. 10th–early 11th c.) was primarily a poet, but authored works on both music and prosody, now lost [BA I: 417–18 (137)].

Al-Rashīd ibn ʿAbbād, the second son of al-Muʿtamid of Seville (1057/8–1135/6), was known for his refinement even as a young man, a skillful lute player, and the patron of an excellent orchestra [*sitāra*] of female slave musicians [BA I: 525–9 (169)].

Umayya ibn Abī Salṭ of Denia (1068–1134) was a physician, philosopher, poet, musician, and historian, and also a fine lute player. His treatise on music (*Risāla fī l-mūsīqā*), which may have survived in Hebrew translation, is discussed in Chapter 7 above [BA I: 722–8 (238)].

Abū ʿĀmir Ibn al-Ḥammāra (fl. 12th c.), poet, musician and composer, was a student of Ibn Bājja. Ibn Saʿīd reports that he used to cut wood with his own hands from which he fashioned his lute, then he composed poems, set them to melodies of his own composition, and sang them [BA VIII: 213–14 (2160)].

Abū Jaʿfar Ibn Ḥassān (1155–1201 or 1202/3), a physician, authored works on medicine and a summary (*ikhtisār*) of the *Great Book of Music* (KMK) of al-Fārābī [BA III: 315–16 (562)]

Abū Muḥammad Ibn Ḥazm (994–1064), the famous genealogist, historian of religion, religious scholar and author of *The Neck-ring of the Dove,* also composed a tract supporting the licitness of listening to music that has

survived (Iḥsān ʻAbbās, ed., *Rasā'il Ibn Ḥazm,* I: 430–9; Spanish trans, Elías Terés Sabáda, "La epístola sobre el canto con música instrumental de Ibn Ḥazm de Córdoba," *Al-Andalus* 36 (1971): 203–14) [BA III: 392–443 (596)].

Abū l-Ḥasan ʻAlī ibn Jūdī (d. after 1135/6), student of Ibn Bājja, polymath and poet, was also the composer of several of the songs listed by al-Tīfāshī (see below) [BA VI: 159–60 (1391)].

Abū Mūsā Ibn Sa'āda (? –1338), was a court physician in Granada whose knowledge and love of music is cited by his biographers [BA V: 24–5 (1012)].

Isḥāq ibn Sham'ūn of Cordoba (? –first half 12th c.) was a Jewish musician and poet who studied with Ibn Bājja (d. 1139) [BA V: 233–4 (1112)].

Abū l-Ḥajjāj Ibn 'Utba (? –1238/9) was a physician and man of letters who was known for his *muwashshaḥāt* and as a singer [BA V: 543–5 (1201)].

Musā ibn Yūsuf/Moshe ibn Yosef Halevi (? – 13th c.), a Jewish philosopher, wrote a treatise on musical harmony that was incorporated into the manuscripts of the Commentary on the *Canon* of Ibn Sīnā' [Avicenna] by Shem Tob ben Yishaq ben Shaprut of Tudela [BA VI: 178–9 (1408)].

Yaḥyā al-Khuḍūj (12th–13th c.?) compiled a large book of Andalusi songs (*Kitāb al-aghānī al-andalusiyya*) in imitation of the *Great Book of Songs* of Abū l-Faraj al-Iṣbahānī, now lost [BA VI: 435–6 (1480)].

Yūsuf al-Mu'taman of Zaragoza (? –1085/6), third ruler of the Banū Hūd dynasty, was a mathematician, scientist, and philosopher, who authored works on geometry, optics, and dedicated a section of one of his books to the science of music [BA VI: 601–4 (1574)].

Abū ʻAbd Allāh al-Uṣūlī (? –1214 or 1216), is said to have composed a treatise on music, although a later commentator reported that this is a false attribution, and that the text in question is actually a work by Ibn Sīnā' [BA VII 584–5 (1827)].

Abū l-Ḥusayn al-Waqqashī (1159– ?), a poet, singer and composer much appreciated by his contemporaries, studied music and other subjects with Abū l-Ḥasan ibn al-Ḥasan ibn al-Ḥāsib [BA VII 599–600 (1836)].

Although we do not have detailed descriptions of their musical skills or of their writings on music, it is clear that upper-class men continued to be devoted aficionados of music during the reigns of the "petty kings," Almoravids, and Almohads. The latter two dynasties are portrayed in historical sources as having been religiously stricter – the term "fundamentalist" is sometimes used – regarding music and the consumption of alcohol, which may account for the dearth of sources about professional male singers in this period. Yet if this were the case, it clearly did not extend to the training, buying, and selling of *qiyān* or the private study and performance of music.

Al-Tīfāshī's description of Andalusi song

Returning once again to al-Tifāshī, we find the single most detailed account of late Andalusi song repertory. Even in the 13th century, some two centuries after the emergence of *muwashshaḥ/zajal* song-form, al-Tīfāshī's focus is almost exclusively on what was apparently for him "serious music," of the type performed by highly trained, female slave singers, professional male singers, and perhaps by some of the skilled scholar-musicians listed above. Al-Tīfāshī characterizes the Andalusians as preserving the older style (*al-ṭarīq al-qadīm*), of the type recorded in al-Iṣbahāni's *Great Book of Songs* (KA). He then offers a list of 56 songs known to him from the current repertory of al-Andalus, the Maghrib and Ifrīqiya sung "in the drinking parties of kings and nobles" [*fi majālis al-mulūk wa-l-ru'asā' 'alā al-sharāb*],[44] noting that their lyrics are from poets of earlier eras – pre-Islamic, early Islamic, Umayyad and 'Abbasid – and their melodies are likewise both old (*qadīma*) and *muwallada*.[45] This latter term as a contrast to "old" might simply mean "new," but it is a word that also carries the connotation of "mixed": a person who is *muwallad*, for example, is someone of mixed parentage. So there may also be a connotation that some of the melodies have been added to, revised, and improved by later singers, as was common practice (see below).

In the following chapter, al-Tīfāshī deals specifically with Andalusi singing (*ghinā' al-Andalus*) and offers a treasure trove of information. As we saw in Chapter 7, he groups these 45 songs into four groups that correspond to four modes, which correspond to four different tunings for the lowest string of the lute: *khusruwānī*, *muṭlaq*, *mazmūm*, and *mujannab*.[46] In addition, he categorizes the songs into two distinct types of composition:

(1) Poems sung in the manner of *nashīd* ("which the Andalusians call *istihlāl*") that are followed by an *'amal* section, which means, he explains, that "they start with heavy/slow notes [*naghamāt thaqīla*] and then bit by bit move on to light/fast notes [*naghamāt khafīfa*] as they pass between the two sections of the song, which creates an ambience of *ṭarab* that listeners enjoy;"[47] and,
(2) Poems sung in the manner of a *ṣawt*, which is all *'amal* with no *istihlāl*.

Al-Tīfāshī's distinction between *nashīd*/*istihlāl* and *'amal* focuses on the speed of the notes, from slow to fast, and their "heaviness," from heavy to light. This seems to be a continuation of the distinction found in earlier centuries in the Mashriq between *nashīd* and *basīṭ*, where the first is free and unmeasured while the second is measured (i.e., rhythmic). If this is the case, then al-Tīfāshī's first category of songs would have an unmeasured opening section and then move to a rhythmic section, whereas the second category (*ṣawt*) would appear to be rhythmic from the beginning. This would mark a shift in terminology, for in earlier centuries a *ṣawt* could be performed with an unmeasured followed by a measured section.

The 11th-century writer al-Ḥasan al-Kātib makes a distinction between two types of unmeasured singing, the *istihlāl* and *nashīd*, saying that the former is sung on "part of a verse" [*juz' min al-bayt*] (i.e., not an entire verse) and should be free flowing [*mursal*] rather than rhythmic, whereas the *nashīd* is sung similarly but to a larger portion of the text, one verse if the song is in two verses, or two verses if the song is four verses long, etc.[48] From this description it appears that for al-Ḥasan al-Kātib, the *istihlāl* is a vocalization on a single syllable or a word or two, which therefore does not attempt to interpret the meaning of the text, whereas the *nashīd* consists of complete verses and presumably involves a greater focus on the lyrics. In the modern Arab World, a similar practice is still current, often referred to as *layālī* and *mawwāl*. The first is a solo non-rhythmic vocalization on one or more very short phrases such as "O night!" (*yā layl*) or "O my eye!" (*yā 'aynī*), the eye being one of the "organs of love" in Arab culture, much as the heart is in the West. This is followed by a *mawwāl* which is also solo and non-rhythmic, but is sung to verses of poetry. Together these introductory genres serve to accustom the listeners' ears to the melodic mode of the song that is to follow. Al-Ḥasan also says that *nashīd* and *istihlāl* are heavy, serious forms of singing, most appropriate for the beginning of a performance.[49]

In his earlier list of "classical" songs, al-Tīfāshī gave only the opening verse of each lyric, presumably with the idea that his Eastern readers would be familiar with them; however, in his list of Andalusi songs, he gives what appears to be the full text of each song (four songs have only one verse, nine have two verses, 16 have three verses, 14 have four verses, and one example has six verses). In addition, he cites the names of each poet and composer, information which is not found in the earlier list of "classical" songs, and also the names of singers who have "improved" or composed "additions" to the original song. Rather mysteriously, four of the songs listed as Andalusi songs also appear in the earlier list of "classical" songs, one with lyrics attributed to Ibn Bājjā, another to Ibn al-Ḥammāra, one to Nuṣayb,[50] and another listed simply as "well known" (*mashhūr*).

At the end of this list he concludes by saying, "Among the male and female singers of al-Andalus there are those who can sing 500 *nawba*s or thereabouts, and the *nawba* among them is: *nashīd*, *ṣawt*, *muwashshaḥ*, and *zajal*." The term *nawba* (*nūba* in modern pronunciation) in more recent centuries has come to mean a compound performance form in which a series of songs with varying rhythms is played one after the other, either in a prearranged order or determined at the moment of performance by the ensemble's leader, which is linked by melodic mode. However, the earlier sense of the term meant something akin to a "turn" at singing, for example, if several singers were present in a gathering, each in turn took a *nawba*. It also referred to the period of time, a "shift," during which a court musician was supposed to be "on call" at court.[51] In Ibn Ḥayyān's 11th-century biography of Ziryāb the term appears in several passages: First, after hearing a three female slave singers sing nine songs (three songs each), "Ziryāb picked up his lute and sang these same songs in a single sequence [*nawba*] with different melodies [*luḥūn*] and techniques [*ṣinā'āt*];" also, Ziryāb sang the three best songs from *Kitab al-Aghānī* with most exquisite artistry and used to call this the "orphan *nawba*" [or the "incomparable *nawba*"].[52] These passages demonstrate that the *nawba* in Ziryāb's era was a unit of *performance*, for the songs sung in a sequence were not related to each other in any musical way (i.e., by rhythm, genre, mode, or mood). In another passage, we are told that the jinn would teach him "something ranging from an [entire] sequence [*nawba*] to a single song [*ṣawt*] every night," after which he would leap up from his bed and teach the new melodies to two of his female slaves so that he would not forget them. Finally, in a passage from the anonymous *Kitāb Akhbār Ziryāb* quoted by Ibn Ḥayyān that appears at the end of a long list of innovations that Ziryāb supposedly introduced to the Cordoban court, the author concludes by saying that

> [Like Ziryāb] every singer begins a performance in the same manner, starting by first singing *nashīd,* in whatever rhythm [*naqr*][53] it might be, then sings *basīṭ*, and concludes by singing *muḥarrakāt* and *ahzāj*, as Ziryāb prescribed to them, and none of them [fail to] maintain this practice even today.[54]

The terms *nashīd* and *basīṭ* are known from other sources, and the *hazaj* (pl. *ahzāj*) is one of the ancient genres of Arab song; however, the term *muḥarrak* ("lively") might refer to a recognized genre or it could be nothing more than an adjective in the sense of "lively songs."[55] This sequence of genres is not, however, referred to as a *nawba*. A similar set of genres is also described by al-Ḥasan al-Kātib, who specifies that a performance should start with the heavy genres of *nashīd* and *istihlāl*, and then move on to the faster, lighter genres of *ramal* and *hazaj* that are appropriate to the end of a performance.[56] What is clear from al-Tīfāshī's list cited above (*nashīd*, *ṣawt*, *muwashshaḥ*, and *zajal*) is that the *muwashshaḥ* and *zajal* had by the 13th century become part of the accepted courtly repertory, though considered the lighter, more popular elements of a performance.

Ziryāb (9th c)	*al-Ḥasan al-Kātib (11th c)*	*al-Tīfāshī (13th c)*
nashīd	*nashīd*	*nashīd*
basīṭ	*istihlāl*	*ṣawt*
muḥarrak	*ramal*	*muwashshaḥ*
hazaj	*hazaj*	*zajal*

All three descriptions of performance practices start with unmeasured and then measured songs in slower, heavier rhythms and afterward move on to lighter, faster genres, but al-Tīfāshī's account is the first to include the *muwashshaḥ* and *zajal* genres.

Some of the lyrics in al-Tīfāshī's list of Andalusi songs are by Eastern poets such as Ḥassān ibn Thābit, ʿUmar ibn Abī Rabīʿa. Abū Nuwās, al-Mutanabbī, al-Sharīf al-Rāḍī, Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī and some lesser-known figures, but there are also some lyrics attributed to the composers themselves, and some 17 songs out of a total of 45, are simply listed as "well known" (*mashhūr*). Despite the diversity of poets tapped for song lyrics, all of the melodic settings for these songs are attributed to only four 12th- and 13th-century composers: Ibn Bājja, Ibn Jūdī, Ibn al-Ḥammāra, and Ibn al-Ḥāsib.

Thirteen of the songs listed were composed by Ibn Bājja (ca. 1085–1138), the most prominent scholar of his age in several fields, for which he also composed two of the texts. According to al-Tīfāshī, it is his style of music that replaced that of Ziryāb. Al-Tīfāshī also credits him with having been "the last to compose in the Maghrib" [*ākhir man kāna yulaḥḥin bi-l-maghrib*]. However, this is followed immediately by a passage that al-Tīfāshī himself scratched out, and soon afterwards al-Tīfāshī directly contradicts this statement, so we should perhaps understand this to mean that he was the last *great* composer. He also states that Ibn Bājja, "devoted himself for years with skilled female slave singers to reworking the *istihlāl* and *'amal* and mixed the singing of the Christians with the singing of the Mashriq, inventing a style that is only found in al-Andalus, which so pleased people there that they refused to listen to anything else."[57] This last remarkable, but frustratingly laconic phrase, has attracted a number of scholarly interpretations. Since al-Tīfāshī wrote a century or so after Ibn Bājja, it is difficult to tell what he is referring to: The compositions that are included in his list of Andalusi songs? Or is this possibly an echo of the emergence of the *muwashshaḥ* with its bilingual *kharja*? Unless other sources come to light, this question will remain unresolved.

Al-Tīfāshī goes on to say,

> After him came Ibn Jūdī, Ibn al-Ḥammāra, and others, who made improvements to his melodies, and created enchanting melodies of their own, to the best of their abilities. The culmination of this craft was Abū l-Ḥusayn Ibn al-Ḥāsib of Murcia, who attained in both knowledge and practice what no other before him had. He has a large book about music in many volumes that includes every composition heard in al-Andalus and in the Maghrib, with lyrics drawn from contemporary poetry, which he compiled.[58]

Al-Tīfāshī's remark that an Andalusi *nawba* in his day consisted of *nashīd*, *ṣawt*, *muwashshaḥ*, and *zajal* is an indication that the *muwashshaḥ*, and *zajal* had come of age and were now included in performances of courtly or "art" music. Yet it is a completely different development in the world of the *muwashshaḥ*, and *zajal* from this same time period that was to prove critical to their survival to the present day: the emergence of religious or devotional songs in these forms, particularly among Sufis. Ibn 'Arabī (1165–1240), the famous Andalusi mystic, poet, and philosopher, is commonly credited with composing the first devotional and mystical *muwashshaḥāt* in Arabic. Despite Ibn 'Arabī's profound impact on Sufi thought, it was his younger Andalusi contemporary, Abū l-Ḥasan al-Shushtarī (1212–69) whose compositions had the most enduring effect on the musical repertories of Sufi orders throughout the Arabic-speaking Middle East.[59] In the post-Iberian traditions of Andalusi music, which eventually came to be defined almost exclusively by *muwashshaḥ* and *zajal* strophic songs, Sufi brotherhoods played a central role in the oral transmission of the repertory (see Epilogue).

Notes

1. The Arabic term *ṭā'ifa*, pl. *ṭawā'if*, refers to a group, faction, party, sect, religious minority or other splinter group, often defined by faith or ethnicity. The phrase *mulūk al-ṭawā'if* has been translated variously as "party kings," "petty kings," and "factional kings."
2. Nykl 1946: 72; Pérès 1937; see also Abdesselem 2001.
3. See Wasserstein 1985.
4. Ibn Ḥayyān, *al-Muqtabis*, 329; *Crónica,* 210–11.
5. The speaker is identified only as "one of the literati" [*ḥakā ba'ḍ al-udabā'*], see al-Shirwānī 2010: 429–31.
6. Zāwī ibn Zīrī founded the independent kingdom of Granada in 1013 and ruled as its first emir until 1019; his grandson, 'Abd Allāh ibn Buluggīn was deposed in 1090 and wrote his famous memoirs, *al-Tibyān*, while imprisoned in exile in Aghmāt, Morocco.
7. These are the closing two lines of a seven-verse poem.
8. Muḥammad ibn 'Ubayd Allāh ibn Qarlumān (fl. late 9th/early 10th c.), son of the more famous poet, 'Ubayd Allāh, was primarily known for his extreme ugliness, for which he was nicknamed *Abū l-jinn,* "father of the jinn." BA Vol. 4: 364 [944].
9. al-Shirwānī 2010: 429–31; Asin Palacios 1959: Arabic, 9–11; cf. Liu and Monroe 1989: 27–8. See also, Ribera 1929: 115–16 [tr. from the Bulaq ed. of *Ḥadīqat al-Afrāḥ,* 1884: 127].
10. al-Marwānī 2010: 81–2. My thanks to Maribel Fierro for calling my attention to this text.
11. Ibn Bassām 2000: 86.
12. Ibid.: 86.
13. See, for example, the *bar'a* dagger dance in the Sultanate of Oman or the *'arḍa* sword dance in Saudi Arabia.
14. Pérès 1937: 385.
15. al-Ḥumaydī 1966: 43–4, in the biography of Judge Muḥammad b. Iṣḥāq b. Salīm Abū Bakr of Cordoba.
16. The term *al-mutaṭabbib* in this context clearly means "the would-be physician" or one who "passed himself off as a physician," although it is not always used derogatorily. The identity of this figure, however, remains unclear; see Iḥsān 'Abbās's footnote in Ibn Bassām 2000: III, 237.
17. Lit., skilled in applying equations to the mean positions of the sun and planets to derive their true positions (see *Ta'dīl*, EI2).
18. The ancient Bedouin system of calendrical units (approximately 28) marked by the setting of different stars (see Anwa', *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd Ed.)
19. Ibn Bassām 2000: III, 237–8; Pérès 1937: 384.
20. See Ferreiro 1983: 129–44. In effect, the Arabic phrase *qā'id khayl rūma*, which Dozy interpreted as a reference to the Pope in Rome, more likely indicates 'the leader of the Christian forces' (al-Maqqarī 1968: IV, 449). See also, Bosch Vilá 1971: 225–33, and 1947–8: 242–61.
21. al-Maqqarī 1968: IV, 450.

22 Ibid.: IV, 449–51.
23 The account of Amatus appears in Smith 1988: 84–7, and in Amatus of Montecassino 2004: 46–7. Boase 1992: 465, has apparently transposed the figure of 1,500 female captives from Ibn Ḥayyān's account to that of Amatus.
24 Boase 1992: 465.
25 Ibid.: 465–6.
26 Amatus 2004: 46–7; Smith 1988: 84–7.
27 al-Maqqarī 1968: IV: 451–2.
28 The "Veiled Ones" (*al-mulaththamūn*) is a reference to the Sanhaja Berber followers of Ibn Tāshufīn (r. ca. 1061–1106), among whom the men covered their faces with "veils" much as modern Tuareg do today. At the moment in question, the Andalusians rightly feared the intentions of Ibn Tāshufīn, who later conquered and ruled the Muslim territories of Iberia.
29 al-Maqqarī 1968: IV, 275–6.
30 Ibn Faḍl Allāh, *Masālik*, ed. Khashaba, 499–500; al-Jubūrī, 443–5; al-Sarīḥī, 616–18.
31 Scheindlin 1974.
32 Dozy 1988: 677–81.
33 Reilly 1982: 234–5, 338–40; a highly romanticized medieval account of her story is found, with English translation, in Smith 1988: 104–7.
34 See Lévi-Provençal 1934: 1–8, 200–1; Montaner Frutos 2005: 272–352; Salazar y Acha 2007: 225–42; the latter includes a survey of the arguments for and against identifying Queen Isabel with Zaida.
35 al-Maqqari 1968: I, 155; he was actually boasting about the intellectual status of Cordoba and the quotation ends with the phrase "Cordoba has more books than any city in the world!" [*Qurṭuba akthar bilād Allāh kutuban*].
36 Ibn Khaldūn 1989: 517–18 – *wa-ṭamā minhā bi-Ishbiliya baḥr zākhir wa-tanāqala minhā ba'd dhahāb ghaḍāratuhā ilā bilād al-'udwa bi-Ifrīqiya wa-l-Maghrib.* Cf. 1958: 405
37 One of the top three best Arabic songs every written according to KA; however, the same lyric was set to music by several different singer-composers. The original was by Ibn Surayj, another was by Ibrāhīm al-Mawṣilī in which he "borrowed" the opening phrase from a song by al-Abjar, and al-Tīfāshī cites yet another version composed by Ibn Bājja.
38 Also one of the top three songs in KA.
39 Al-Ṭanjī 1968: 103, cf. Liu and Monroe 1989: 37–8; the final phrase has been crossed out in the original ms. according to al-Ṭanjī.
40 In 8th- and 9th-century Baghdad, many of the most famous courtesans and singers were *muwalladāt*, both of Arab fathers and slave mothers. Their legal status was ambiguous, but many of them were treated, bought, and sold as slaves, see Gordon 2017: 34–5
41 al-Tīfāshī 2019: 281–304.
42 For Spanish sources on medieval puppetry, see Keller 1959: 205–9.
43 Citations are to the *Biblioteca de al-Andalus* (BA) including volume, page, and the number of the entry in parentheses.
44 Al-Ṭanjī 1968: 102; Liu and Monroe 1989: 36.
45 *Wa-kadhālika alḥānuhā minhā qadīma wa-muwallada.* Al-Tanjī 1968: 102, Liu and Monroe 1989: 37 ("Similarly, some of their melodies are ancient, [pre-Islamic] ones, and some are Islamic").

46 The term *mujtathth* occurs in the text, but this is a mistake for *mujannab*, as Liu and Monroe have pointed out.

47 Al-Tanjī 1968: 104; Liu and Monroe 1989: 38.

48 al-Ḥasan al-Kātib 1975: 82–3; French trans. 1972: 128–9.

49 al-Ḥasan al-Kātib 1975: 126; French trans. 1972: 175–6.

50 Nuṣayb ibn Rabaḥ, of Nubian slave origin, fl. end of 7th c.

51 See Sawa 2015: 502.

52 Ar. *al-nawba al-yatīma*. The three verses which follow are found in the manuscript transcribed as if they were a single poem; however, in the far right-hand margin where the copyist usually places decorative patterns of three dots at the beginning of every verse of poetry, there appears instead the word *ākhar*, "another one;" see Ibn Ḥayyān 1999: 153 vº.

53 The Arabic term *naqr* indicates rhythm (not *tañido*, see *Crónica*, 207).

54 As Makkī has noted (*al-Muqtabis*, 324, n. 5), this final phrase is the opposite of what the context would seem to require. Makkī suggests that before the verb *lam yata'ahhadhā* a word such as *yukhilla* [fail to] may have been lost, thus "and none of them [fail to] maintain this until today." Al-Maqqarī (1968: III, 128) quoted this passage nearly verbatim, but dropped the problematic final phrase.

55 al-Ḥasan al-Kātib 1975: 126; 1972: 175–6.

56 *Ramal* is both a poetic meter and a rhythm, but it is clear that it is the rhythm that is referred to here.

57 al-Ṭanjī 1968: 115; Liu and Monroe 1989: 42.

58 al-Ṭanjī 1968: 115; Liu and Monroe 1989: 42.

59 Alvarez 2009; Corriente 1988.

11 The “Age of Minstrels” (13th–15th c.)

The 13th century marks a dramatic change in the types of historical documentation available about Andalusi music and musicians in Iberia. Arabic sources from this point are very sparse: there are no biographies of musicians or *qiyān* from this period*,* fewer and fewer anecdotes are found in historical and travel accounts, and virtually no song texts or accounts of new compositions are recorded. This is no doubt due in part to the dramatic decrease in the territory under Muslim control, which, after the fall of Seville in 1284, left the Nasrid kingdom of Granada as little more than a small rump state that survived to a great extent by paying tribute to Christian monarchs. A substantial percentage of Iberian Muslims were now living under Christian rule, referred to as *mudéjares*, purportedly from the Arabic root *d-j-n*, meaning to become “domesticated” or “tamed” in reference to animals, and in reference to people, “to stay at home” [*dajana fī baytihi idhā lazimahu*] or “to be familiar to the household” [*mā alifa l-bayta*].[1] By the 15th and 16th centuries, Muslims in Christian lands were writing texts in *Aljamiado*, a term for writing Castilian or Catalan in Arabic script. The fact that even basic religious texts about Islam were being composed and copied in *Aljamiado* for local consumption indicates that Muslim communities were becoming native speakers of Castilian and/or Catalan, and that Arabic was becoming more and more restricted in use.[2] In the kingdom of Granada, the last Muslim foothold on the Peninsula, the population continued to speak Arabic; however, the massive book-burnings and successive prohibitions against owning Arabic books that marked the century after the fall of Granada in 1492 effectively obliterated a large body of Arabic writings, as the list of lost works on music cited above demonstrates. Ironically, what little information exists about music in the late Nasrid period must be gleaned almost exclusively from works penned by the Christian conquerors in the 16th century.

In contrast, starting in the 13th century, the textual, iconographic, and financial documentation of Muslim and Jewish musicians in regions under Christian rule becomes comparatively rich. Menéndez Pidal’s groundbreaking study *Poesía juglaresca y Juglares* [*Minstrel Poetry and Minstrels*] (1924), not only asserted the importance of popular oral poetic traditions for the study of Romance literatures, but also brought together an impressive amount of evidence about Arab and Jewish musicians and entertainers in northern Spain, which has since been supplemented by the research of other scholars.[3] The Muslim and Jewish musicians who appear in the royal financial records of Castile, Aragon, and Catalonia, and in those of various municipalities, are cited primarily as instrumentalists, in keeping with the common practice of referring to court musicians by the main instrument they played, for example: "Ali, *tañedor de rabel*" [ʿAli, player of the *rabāb*] or "Ismael, *judio*, *tañedor de rota*" [Ishmael, Jew, player of the rote], or "Mohamet, *moro*, *trompatero*" [Muḥammad, Moor, trumpeter]. These sources provide fascinatingly detailed accounts of how many musicians, of what type, and with what salaries, royal courts and municipalities employed, but unfortunately give us very little sense of what type of music they performed or of how their performances were received by their Christian audiences. There are surprisingly few references to singers, so it is possible that some of these instrumentalists were "minstrels" in the sense that they sang while accompanying themselves on their instruments.

Las Cantigas de Santa María

The richest and most famous iconographic source from the 13th century is the *Cantigas de Santa María* attributed to Alfonso X el Sabio ("the Wise"), who achieved fame as a patron of the arts and sciences. In particular, the two Escorial codices of the *Cantigas* (T I 1 and b I 2) along with the *Libro de Ajedrez, Dados e Tablas* (Escorial T I 6) offer a remarkable portrait of the medieval Iberian instrumentarium.[4] The Escorial copy of the *Cantigas* b I 2 (commonly referred to as E1) includes 41 miniatures portraying musicians playing 44 different instruments, alone or in pairs. These miniature tableaux, each featuring one or two musicians, offer remarkably detailed images of the musical instruments, but they do not necessarily represent common musical practices, so we cannot take the artistic pairings as representing typical ensembles. Curiously, many of the instruments that other sources most strongly associate with Arabic-speaking Andalusians are here depicted in the hands of Christian musicians, while the one portrayal that is without doubt meant to show a Muslim musician shows him playing a *baldosa*, an instrument that no other source mentions in connection with Arabs, Muslims, or al-Andalus.[5] This is perhaps the single most famous image from this manuscript, and clearly portrays a Muslim and a Christian playing their instruments together while the Christian sings, with a pitcher on a low table sitting nearby in the background. This image is so famous that dozens of scholars have provided brief characterizations of it, most of whom have followed the interpretation of Menéndez Pidal, to wit, that these are two minstrels, one Muslim and one Christian, performing a duet, while standing next to a low table that holds the wine that inspires their singing [see Figure 14].[6]

A rather different interpretation of this image suggests itself, however, if one notes that the Christian is wearing a sword. It is unlikely that a minstrel or

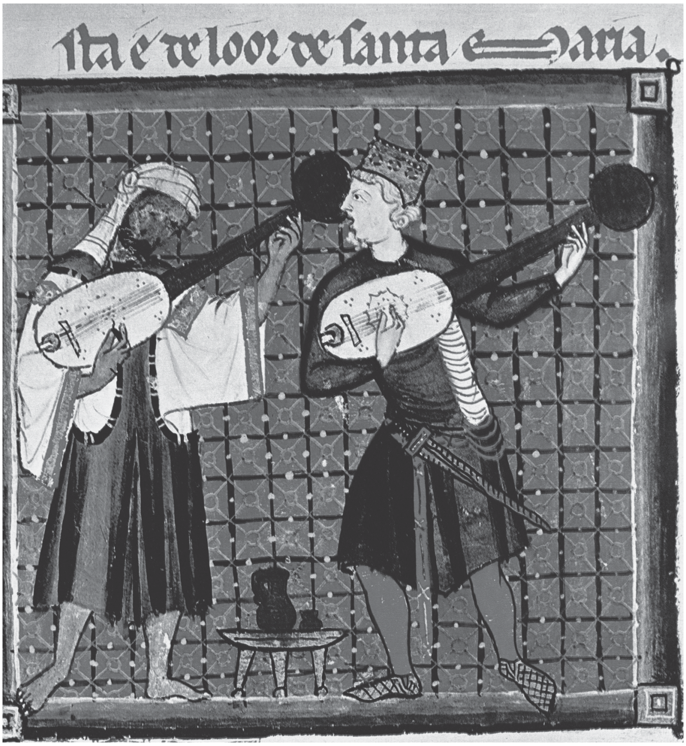
sta e de loor de santa maria.

Figure 14 *Cantigas de Santa María* (13th c.), a Moor and a Christian performing together.

musician of any sort would own a sword, let alone be allowed to appear armed while performing in the royal court. The sword is more likely an indication of the high social status of the Christian, who is perhaps a knight, a nobleman, or even a prince (in which case his highly decorated – bejeweled? – headgear would be further evidence of high status). The main point of the image may in fact be that a Christian of high rank is performing with a "Moor," in other words, an image that imparts more of a social commentary than a musical one. Several commentators have noted that the "Moor" is barefoot and that the Christian is shod, but this is probably nothing more than a realistic portrayal of the Arab Muslim custom of removing shoes when entering domestic spaces. A quick comparison with another image, also produced under the patronage of Alfonso X, from the *Libro de Ajedrez*, depicts a Christian playing chess with a Muslim in the Muslim's pavilion [see Figure 15].

It is now the "Moor" who wears a sword, and their footgear is portrayed as before, with the Muslim barefoot and the Christian shod. Both images feature a pitcher and one cup, but to be honest, whether this is water or wine, we really cannot tell.

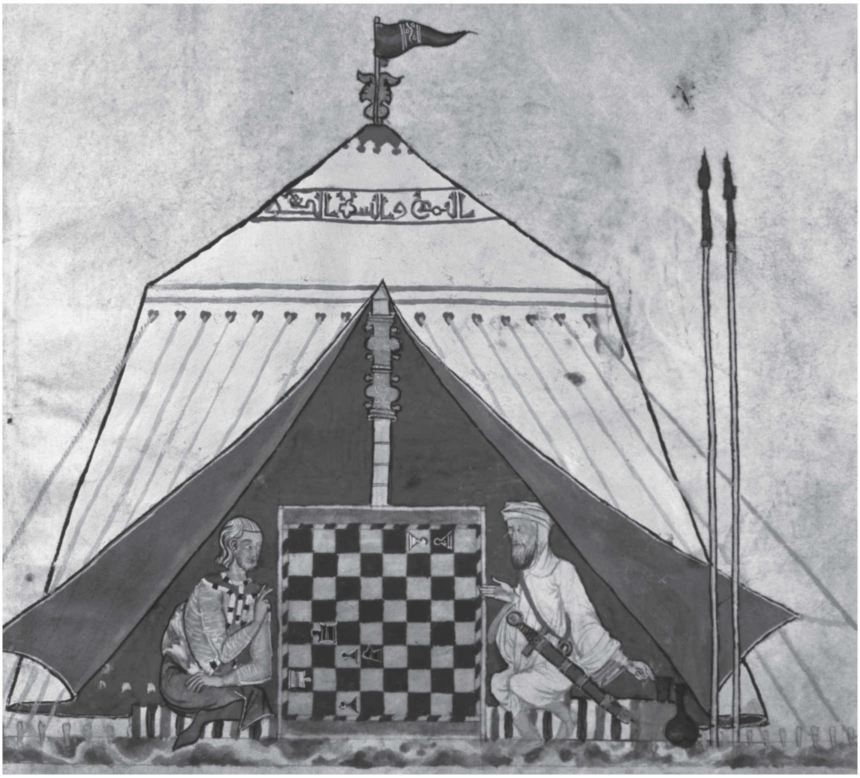

Figure 15 El Libro de Ajedrez (13th c.), a Christian and Moor playing chess.

Some scholars identify two other miniatures in the *Cantigas* as portrayals of Jewish musicians playing zithers and harps, based on the idea that Christian artists often distinguished Jews by portraying them with distinctive headgear and beards. Other scholars, however, have identified the yellow patches on the sleeves of some of the musicians as an indication that the musicians are Jewish, though the "Moor" above is also shown with yellow patches on his sleeves, as is the male musician performing on the *būq* (see cover image and Chapter 5), who is not only blond and clean shaven, but is also shown wearing an ornate headpiece similar to that of the Christian noble singing with the Moorish musician. In the end, given the dearth of supporting evidence from other sources, these identifications should be considered no more than educated guesses.

Andalusi musicians in Christian courts

Despite the remarkable art work in the *Cantigas,* not much is known about the musicians of Alfonso X's court. In contrast, the financial records of his son, Sancho IV of Castile, who reigned from the death of this father in 1285 until his own death in 1295, offer a detailed portrait of entertainment in his court. In 1293, his 27 salaried musicians included 13 Muslims (including two women), 13 Christians, and one Jewish musician along with his wife. In July of that year they received their salaries as well as gifts of cloth.[7] An additional group of 15 Muslim drummers also received payments in April and November of 1294, and again in February 1295.[8] The Jewish musician, Ismael, played the *rota*, but his wife also received payments and may perhaps have been a singer or dancer. Among the Muslims, Rexit (*Rashīd*) played flute (*axebaba*); Yuçaf, Muça, Çale, Abdalla, Xatiuí, Hamet, Fate, Mahomet (Yūsuf, Mūsā, Ṣāliḥ, ʿAbdallāh, Khātiwī,[9] Ḥāmid, Fāṭḥī [?], Muḥammad) played two different types trumpet (*añafil* and *trompa)*, two additional Muslims and the wife of one of them were entertainers/acrobats (*saltadores*); and the wife of Fate the trumpeter also received payments, perhaps as a singer or dancer.[10] The salaried Christian musicians all played trumpet or drum. It is clear from these records that the *salaried* musicians of the court were primarily engaged in providing pomp and circumstance for arrivals, departures, the beginnings and ending of public events, banquets, and the like. Only the Jewish player of the *rota* and the Muslim flute player would appear to have been engaged as instrumentalists for more domestic entertainment. Singing and other entertainment in Sancho's court were apparently provided primarily by traveling performers who appear at various points in the financial records, such as "Arias Paez juglar," "maestre Martin de los organos," "las soldaderas del infante Don Pedro de Aragon," "un joglar de tamborete," "García Yañez, enano [dwarf]," "Arnalt, joglar," and some "joglaresas" who received payment for the purchase or rental of a donkey.

The group of Muslim and Jewish musicians in the court of Sancho IV, however, is but the tip of the iceberg, for the financial records of Castile and the house of Aragon and Catalonia, and a traveler's account of Portugal, document the nearly constant presence of Arab and Jewish musicians in royal courts for nearly two centuries:[11]

- Pedro III of Aragon (r. 1276–85)
- Sancho IV of Castile (r. 1284–95)
- James II of Aragon (r. 1291–1327)
- Alfonso IV of Aragon (r. 1327–36)
- Pedro IV of Aragon (r. 1336–87)
- Juan I of Aragon (r. 1387–96)
- Martin of Aragon (r. 1396–1410)
- Juan II of Castile (r. 1406–54)
- Fernando I of Aragon (r. 1412–16)
- Alfonso V of Aragon (r. 1416–58)
- Manuel I of Portugal (r. 1469–1521)

Muslim and Jewish performers appear in these records in a variety of roles, sometimes as salaried musicians of the court, and sometimes attending court at the personal invitation of a monarch. In February 1337, for example, Pedro

IV of Aragon wrote from Valencia to the municipal authorities in Játiva asking that a certain Hali [ʿAlī] Ezigua, a "juglar" (minstrel) and *rabāb* player (*tocador de rabeu*), be sent to him. The town council sent this musician to him along with another, one Cahat [Shaḥḥāt] Mascum, a player of the flute (*ajabeba*). They were so successful that the king incorporated them into his household and granted them each an annual salary of 100 *sueldos*.[12] Pedro's letter offers evidence not only of the importation of professional musicians from the south, but also that the reputation of a specific Muslim musician had reached the Christian monarch and prompted the royal request that this particular *rabāb* player be sent to him. Another flute player from Játiva, along with other musicians, was summoned to the Navarrese court of Olite to perform at the 1439 wedding of Charles, the Prince of Viana, and Ines de Cleves, in the northernmost section of Spain, in a region that had never come under Muslim control.[13]

Some Christian monarchs embraced Andalusi culture in a variety of ways. Henry IV of Castile (1425–74, r. 1454–74), half-brother of the future queen Isabella, for example, was (in)famous for donning "Moorish" apparel and adopting certain "Moorish" customs. He surrounded himself with a Muslim bodyguard, sat cross-legged on the floor, ate and drank "in the heathen manner," and displayed so much sympathy for Andalusi culture that it was rumored that he was secretly a Muslim.[14] He was rather openly gay and consorted with "handsome boys," one of whom, Diego Arias, a converted Jew originally from Avila, was a street musician who juggled and sang "Moorish songs," before he attracted Henry's attention.[15] In Portugal, the court of Manuel I (r. 1469–1521) featured "Moorish musicians who sang and played lutes, and tambourines and drums."[16] In these cases it would appear that Andalusi music was appreciated aesthetically, and that at least some members of the court may have had enough knowledge of Arabic, or had the lyrics translated to them by the musicians or court translators, so that they could understand some of the sentiments expressed. In other cases, it is not clear whether Andalusi musicians performed before knowledgeable audiences or merely as curiosities.[17]

The remarkable survival of the financial records of the Crown of Aragon and Catalonia, allows us to trace a single family of Muslim minstrels through the reigns of three consecutive kings:[18]

On June 12 1389, King Juan I (r. 1387–96) wrote to Valencia asking that the wife of Alfuley [al-Fūlānī?],[19] his mother, and the most talented female Moorish "juglaresses" of Valencia be sent to his court as soon as they received his letter, and that they should bring their musical instruments and their *jochs*, literally "games," but here probably whatever other equipment they used in their performances:

> *Com nos per nostre deport e per plaer vullam oir sonor e veure jugar la muller de Alfuley e sa mare e les atres mores juglaresses de Valencia ls pus*

> *aptes, manam vos expressament que encontinent, vista la present letra, les façats venir ab lurs estruments e jochs …*[20]

On September 9th of that same year he ordered that they be paid a reasonable amount so that they could return to their homes with his permission in a letter that mentions several of their names: Maçot [Masʿūd] Fuley, Xamari Mariem [Shammarī? Maryam], his mother, and the other Moorish "juglars."[21]

Some 24 years later, in 1413, King Fernando (r. 1412–16) wrote from Lérida asking that these same minstrels, or perhaps their descendants, along with their wives – *los jutglars moros Alfuleys ab ses mullers* – be sent to him at Zaragoza for an event to take place on January 12, noting in passing that they used to entertain his uncle, King Martin I (r. 1396–1410). In addition, he ordered that they be clothed in livery all of one color (*e vestits los a tots de continent de una color*).[22] Ten months later he again wrote to Valencia asking that the Moorish female dancer from Mizlata (*la mora balladora de Mizlata*) be sent to him.

King Alfonso V of Aragon (r. 1416–58) inherited the love of music of his forebears and continued the royal patronage of Moorish performers. In June 1417, he wrote asking that Nutza the dancer-minstrel of Valencia (*la balladora mora juglaressa de Valencia*) be sent to him, and in January 1418, he gave an order that four Moorish *balladors*, whom he refers to as *de casa nostra* (that is, musicians of his own court), be given a Christmas gift 20 gold florins: Moratxo [Murād], his wife Uzeys [?], his son, Abdalla, and his wife, Muzeys [?].[23] In April of 1425, he sent money to cover the costs of a group Moorish dancers and musicians of Játiva (*los moros e mores balladores de Xativa*) to travel to his court to perform for him.[24] For a period of time the Muslim minstrels and dancers Alf Amar, Fátima, Çahat, Moratxo, Abdalá, and others entertained him.[25] In addition, he personally intervened in a court case to defend a singer and dancer (*cantratrice, tripuciatrice*), Catherina, who was in trouble due to her Moorish costume (*habitu morisco*).[26]

What, however, did these Muslim and Jewish musicians and dancers perform for the kings and nobles of Aragon and Catalonia? They are certainly not the trained professional singers of the courtly *ṣawt* tradition, nor is there any indication that they sang *muwashshaḥ/zajal* songs, which would, in any case, have required a very advanced knowledge of Arabic to appreciate. In general, the 14th century in northern Iberia witnessed a shift in nomenclature among performers in the royal courts. Performers who combined music with dancing, acrobatics, juggling, and other forms of entertainment, had traditionally been termed *juglares*, thought to derive from *jocularis/joculator*.[27] A new class of performers, however, who were primarily singers, sometimes accompanying themselves on a musical instrument, were claiming the label of *menestrel/ministril*, a term that was working its way south from France. In the court of Aragon and Catalonia, as well as in Castile, singers arriving from elsewhere in Europe were more and more frequently referred to as "minstrels," whereas the Muslim and Jewish performers continued to be called *juglares* and *bailadores* (Cat. *balladors*). It is unclear whether the retention of the older term marked these performers by their religion and/or origin, or if they were simply carrying on a performance tradition of the past that was dissimilar to the "singing minstrels" from elsewhere. These "Moorish *juglares*" seem, in any case, to be from a different class of musician/performer than the courtly singers found in earlier Arabic sources. Had there always been a class of more popular performers in al-Andalus who simply do not appear in the historical record because they were deemed too popular or too vulgar? Or were these Muslim and Jewish *juglares* and dancers instead a new development tied to the loss of Andalusi courtly patronage and perhaps an adaptation to life under Christian rule? For the moment, the record is too sparse to provide even a provisional answer.

To place the presence of such Arab and Jewish performers in context, it is necessary to note that during their stays in the court of Aragon–Catalonia, minstrels from France, Portugal, Bavaria, Bohemia, Navarra, Mallorca, England, Valencia, Cyprus, Flanders, Armagnac, Sicily, Austria, Germany, Scotland, as well as many different cities in the Iberian Peninsula, were also in residence.[28] Thus, Muslim and Jewish performers were but a small percentage of a remarkably cosmopolitan mixture. This also means that minstrels from across Europe came into direct contact with musicians from the Muslim South. In addition, not only did minstrels from elsewhere in Europe come to Iberia, but Castilian and Catalan minstrels were regularly sent to Flanders where they attended the "schools of Flanders," attended by minstrels from many parts of Europe and usually traveled from one noble house and court to the next, performing for each of their hosts:[29]

> Infante Juan (later Juan I of Aragon) wrote on June 20, 1373 to organize a performance of his minstrels for the King of France in Paris on their way to Bruges to attend "las escuelas de Flandes" and asked that they acquire a *rota* and bring it back with them when they return.[30]

Thus, musicians with first-hand knowledge of what "Moorish" music sounded like traveled the intricate itineraries of court minstrels throughout Europe, and musicians from the Muslim South came into direct contact with music from across Europe. It is not difficult to imagine that such musicians might learn one or two songs from these various styles with which to entertain their patrons and audiences when they returned home. They also almost certainly acted as "conduits of courtly culture" by providing verbal accounts of the food, dances, courtly protocols, clothing, customs, and mores of different regions and courts. Although others, such as merchants and other travelers, might also move from one region to another, these musicians were ensconced deep in the heart of the court, observing – or hearing from fellow servants – all the details of courtly life. If they did not entertain princes and nobles with these accounts directly, they certainly would have shared stories of exotic customs from other lands with other attendants and orderlies of their own social class. In the Age of Minstrels, a minstrel might be much more than just a musician.

Church and municipal musicians

Although it may at first be surprising to find Muslim and Jewish musicians in so many of the Christian courts of the north, there is evidence that indicates an even deeper level of musical contact. It became common practice to hire minstrels, including Muslims and Jews, to perform inside churches during nightlong vigils where the singing of songs and the playing of musical instruments were "completely contrary to that for which the vigils had been instituted."[31] Eventually, in 1322, the Council of Valladolid was forced to issue a strong condemnation of the custom of employing Muslim and Jewish musicians to perform inside churches.[32] There is also abundant evidence of participation by Muslims and Jews in the civil ceremonies of the Christian kingdoms, though it is unclear whether this participation was welcomed or accepted only grudgingly. During the reign of Juan II of Castile (1406–54), for example, Prince Enrique was to be wed to Princess Blanca, daughter of King Juan of Navarra. In 1440, as she and her mother the queen traveled south for the marriage ceremony, they arrived in the small town of Briviesca, north of Madrid:

> where they were solemnly received by all of the inhabitants of the city, each official took out his banner and his *entreines* (entourage) as best he could, with great dances and much enjoyment and delight; and after them came the Jews with their Torah and the Muslims with their Qur'an, in the manner that is usually done for Kings who have recently come to the throne in other parts; and there came many trumpets, players of wind instruments, tambourines, and drums (*atabales*), which made much noise as if a great host were approaching.[33]

This practice appears to have been widespread from the number of mentions found in various sources.[34] For the Festival of Santo Tomás (1430, Murcia), the hiring of a Muslim *juglar* named Alanzaque, to perform with the other performers is noted into the Municipal records:

> *Otrosi dio e pago Alanzaque, moro, que fue aperçebir a los dichos juglares al val de Ricote, de jornal siete maravedis e medio en la dicha moneda …* VII m. V din.[35]

Another remarkable document records a request that the "Moorish quarters" [*morerías*] be combed to find *juglares* to perform at the festival of Corpus Christi:

> *Otros y por quanto la fiesta del Cuerpo de Dios viene muy çerca la qual de cada anno se fase muy honnrada e solebne mente ordenaron e mendaron al dicho Juan Ferrandes de Canpo mayordomo sobre dicho que envie a todas estas morerias para vengan los mas juglares que pudieren ser avidos para la dicha fiesta …*[36]
>
> … send to all of the "Moorish quarters" so that the most minstrels possible be "eager" [to participate] in this celebration …

In a number of municipalities, Muslims were employed as trumpeters, drummers, and instrumentalists for civic ceremonies. On March 3rd, 1407, for example, "Ali Exadit moro" and a Christian man each received a contract for one year as municipal trumpeters, with a salary of 100 sds and seven lengths (*alnas*) of *camprédon* cloth. Ali was still on the payroll in 1410 at a salary of 10 lls. and 7 lengths of cloth.[37] On August 30, 1443 a musician by the name of Mahoma Chacho [Muḥammad Sha'shū'] was paid 10 *sueldos* for having played his *cazamura* at the preceding holidays.[38]

In one of the most detailed studies yet, Joaquin Aparici Marti uncovered financial records in the archives of the city of Vila-Real detailing payments by the municipality to 50 different Muslim musicians, 47 men and 3 women, during the 15th century. The city of Vila Real was established by royal decree of James I of Aragon in 1274 and was almost exclusively Christian, in contrast to the rest of the conquered region, which was predominantly Muslim. The musicians included drummers, tambourine players, trumpeters, players of different types of wind instruments (*dulcainas*, *cornemusses*), one lute player and one singer (*coblegador*). Several are listed as performers on multiple instruments, and ten of them are noted as being *juglares* as well as being musicians, indicating perhaps that they also sang or performed in some other fashion.[39] For the moment we can only wonder how many other municipal archives contain similar financial records detailing the rather remarkable role of Muslim (*mudéjar*) musicians in the 13th- to 15th-century cities of Iberia.[40] From the records that have already come to light, however, it seems clear that Muslims living under Christian rule frequently found a niche in this new society as professional musicians. This does not always imply, however, that they were performing Andalusi music.

The "Moro de Zaragoza" is a remarkable case of a Muslim family who for four generations specialized in instrument making of a decidedly non-Arab sort – keyboard instruments. Indeed, Mahoma Mofferriz, the "Moor of Zaragoza," is sometimes credited with having invented the *claviorgan*, a combination organ and string instrument, which he and his family members produced for a number of years. He received payments from the municipality of Zaragoza, received a special order for a *claviorgan* from the Bishop of Palenzia, constructed another for Juan, the son of the Catholic Monarchs Isabella and Ferdinand, and a member of his family (perhaps his brother) constructed one for King Manuel I of Portugal. He is several times referred to as a master of constructing *clavicímablos*, *clavicordios*, *órganos y claviórganos*.

His wife, Fatima, was also from a family of musicians, his sons carried on the tradition of building keyboard instruments, and in 1525 when, at the order of Carlos V, the Muslims of Aragon were given the choice between expulsion or conversion, he was baptized Juan (Joan) Mofferriz and his wife became Candida; in 1530 he is referred to along with a group of other musicians as "new converts."[41] The *claviorgan* was an expensive and very complicated instrument that eventually found its place in the courts of a number of European nobles; several such instruments, for example, referred to as "virgynalls with regals," appear in the 1547 inventory of the possessions of Henry VIII of England.[42]

"Moorish" music at times went hand in hand not only with a taste for "Moorish" dress, but also with "Moorish" dance, in particular the *zambra.*[43] The term *zambra* is derived from the Arabic *samra*, a gathering or entertainment, and is a term still used in flamenco music today. The word was used for a variety of ideas connected to music and dance, namely: a) a specific dance; b) a party or gathering where there was music and dance; or, c) the group of musicians performing the music who were individually referred to as *zambreros*.[44] The *zambra* as a dance achieved remarkable popularity, albeit probably in much altered form, among the nobility of Christian Spain. In 1429 we find an account of the royal Castilian court dancing *zambras* in Valladolid at the farewell party for Dona Leanor, sister to the kings of Aragon and Navarra, who was about to travel to Lisbon to marry the prince of Portugal. The Archbishop of Lisbon had come to accompany her on her journey. She asked him to dance a *zambra* with her, but he politely declined saying that if he had known that such an elegant lady was going to invite him to dance a *zambra*, he would not have worn his long formal robes.[45] The implication of the bishop's comment appears to be that the *zambra* was a lively dance that could not be performed easily in his churchly attire. This conclusion is confirmed by a remark made by López de Gómara, the personal chaplain of Hernando Cortés, about a particularly energetic Aztec dance: "All those who have seen it say that it is quite something to see and is even better than that *zambra de los moros* which is the best dance we know."[46]

The Catholic Monarchs Isabella and Ferdinand put an end to the remarkable musical cosmopolitanism of their predecessors and instead hired almost exclusively Iberian musicians for their chapel and court, and they no longer sent their minstrels to the "escuelas de Flandes."[47] They were, however, at the same time ensconced in a court that included a surprising amount of "Moorish" dress and dancing, as well as not a few Muslims.[48]

The 13th–15th centuries mark a pivotal shift to the north in historical documentation with rich iconographic sources such as the *Cantigas de Santa María* as well as extraordinary financial records, all of which demonstrate a constant flow of musicians in and out of northern Iberia from the Muslim South and from continental Europe. The Muslim musicians whose mention is preserved in these documents are of an entirely different type than that of the *qiyān* and master singers of the courts of earlier eras. This class of more popular minstrels and entertainers may well have existed during the eras of the Umayyads, the "petty kings," the Almoravids and the Almohads, but the surviving Arabic sources do not mention them. This is also a period when there was a growing flow of Muslim and Jewish emigrants from al-Andalus to North Africa and the Mashriq. Indeed, many of the figures mentioned here followed that route, including Maimonides, Ibn ʻArabī, al-Shushtarī, and others. Included in those waves of emigration were undoubtedly many musicians and singers who carried with them a treasury of knowledge of Andalusi music.

Notes

1 See *Lisān al-ʻArab*; since the term is Arabic, it was presumably created by Arabic-speaking Muslims in reference to themselves, so it seems more likely that it was used in the sense of "remaining at home" or "familiar" than the sense of "domesticated" or "tamed," unless it was coined sardonically.

2 Harvey 2005: 129–93.

3 The original work was published in 1924, but the sixth edition, enlarged and revised, was published in 1957 with a new title: *Poesía juglaresca y Juglares. Orígenes de las Literaturas Románicas* (Madrid: Institúto de Estudios Políticos, 1957). Page numbers cited here are to the edition published by Colección Austral, Editorial Espasa-Calpe 1991.

4 Álvarez 1987: 67–104.

5 See Andrés 2001: 35–6.

6 Menéndez Pidal 1991: 139: *"presenta ante nuestros ojos las figuras de un juglar moro y otro Cristiano cantando a dúo, ambos de pie junto a una mesita donde está el vino que les inspira."*

7 Ibid.: 139, 248.

8 Ibid.: 483–6.

9 I.e, "the one from Jātiva."

10 Menéndez Pidal 1991: 483–6.

11 See the detailed discussion of Moorish and Jewish *juglares* in the courts of northern Spain in Menéndez Pidal 1991 and the numerous original documents reproduced in Gómez Muntané 1977.

12 Menéndez Pidal 1991: 267–8.

13 Ibid., 140.

14 These and many other references are found in Palencia 1904–8. See for example, Vol. I, 61, 190, 375; see also Leo of Rozmital 1957: 90–4.

15 Palencia, I: 94; Menéndez Pidal 1991: 300–1; Cf. Miller 1972: 17. Although this work is based on Palencia and other authentic sources, one can only wonder why such an overtly homophobic author devoted himself to writing a full-length biography of an openly homosexual historical figure.

16 Knighton 2017: 16, note 14: "According to Damião de Gois, *tinha musicos mouriscos, que cantavan, & tangião com alaudes, & pandeiros, & tamboris*."

17 For a study of the broader phenomenon of affinity for "Moorish" culture among Iberian Christians, see Fuchs 2009.

18 Gómez Muntané 1977: 71, 162–3, 172–4.

19 Ibid., the name is transcribed *Fuleny* on page 71, which makes more sense in Arabic, but *Alfuley* on pp. 162–3, 172–4.

20 Ibid., 162.

21 Ibid., 163.

22 Ibid., 172; the practice of dressing court musicians in matching costumes, i.e. in livery, originated in the court of Burgundy and spread rapidly throughout many of the courts of Europe, see Knighton 1983: 11, 39, 43; and C. Wright 1979: 23–54.

23 Gómez Muntané 1977: 173.

24 Ibid., 174–5.

25 Anglés 1975: II, 935.

26 Gómez Muntané 1977: 174.

27 Menéndez Pidal 1991: 30.

28 Gómez Muntané 1977: 63–73.

29 Ibid., 73–7; see also, C. Wright 1979: 32–4. In Burgundy, the practice of sending minstrels to the "schools" came to an end in the last decade of the 14th century.

30 Gómez Muntané 1977: 134.

31 Menéndez Pidal 1991: 110; see Kreitner 1992: 532–46.

32 Menéndez Pidal 1991: 139.

33 Rosell 1953: 565. My thanks to Teófilo Ruíz for directing me to this example.

34 Menéndez Pidal 1991: 140–1.

35 Arch. Mun. Libro de Proprios 1429–30, fol 89–90

36 Arch. Mun. Actas Capit 1424–5, fol 95, sabado 2 de junio

37 Rubio García 1973: 105–6.

38 Menéndez Pidal 1991: 140; the *cazamura* remains unidentified.

39 Aparici Marti 2007: 579–92.

40 Romero-Camacho 2002: 415.

41 Calahorra 1974: 99–104.

42 British Library, Harley Ms. 1419.

43 Navarro García 1993: 11–25.

44 See the *Vocabulista* de Pedro de Alcalá and the discussion of the term by Zayas 1995: 23–9.

45 Navarro Garcia 1993: 11–12.

46 Stevenson 1960: 21 (*Todos los que an visto este vayle dizen que es cosa mucha para ver y mejor que la zambra de los moros, que es la mejor dança que por aca sabemos*).

47 Knighton 1983: 103, 203

48 Knighton 1983: 207; Valdivieso 2017; also, González Marrero 2014: 17–73 and 2015: 155–94.

12 Music of the Moriscos (16th–17th c.)

The Nasrid kingdom of Granada survived for two and half centuries after the rest of the Peninsula had been conquered by Christian forces, primarily as a client state of the Crown of Castile, but eventually that relationship came to an end, and the Spanish monarchs Ferdinand and Isabella set out to capture the last bastion of Andalusi culture. The war for Granada lasted a decade, from 1482 to 1492, during which time their armies successfully seized one city after another until only a tiny region around the city of Granada itself remained under Muslim control. In the end, the Nasrid leader, Abū ʿAbd Allāh (Boabdil in Spanish sources), opted to surrender the city after negotiating a treaty, the Capitulations, rather than wage a bloody house-to-house defense. As a result, he and his family were granted safe passage out of the city to the small region which he was to be allowed to reign as a sort of independent principality, the Alpujarras, on the southern slope of the Sierra Nevada. In 1493, however, he left for Morocco, never to return.

As part of the surrender agreement, the Muslim inhabitants of Granada were granted the same rights as *mudéjar* Muslims (i.e., Muslims living under Christian rule) held elsewhere in Spain: the right to practice their religion freely, the right to handle legal problems within their own community according to their own laws, and the right to maintain their own culture in terms of language, dress, and music.[1] In contrast, the Catholic Monarchs moved quickly to expel their Jewish subjects. In the "Alhambra Decree" (*Decreto de la Alhambra*) issued on March 31, 1492, Jews were ordered to leave the kingdoms of both Aragon and Castile within three months, before July 31. Muslims fared, for a very brief period, slightly better. The first archbishop appointed to Granada in 1492, Hernando de Talavera, wholeheartedly supported and protected the rights granted in the Capitulations and set about to convert Muslims to Christianity by persuasion rather than force. He ordered that a Castilian–Arabic dictionary and grammar be written, the *Vocabulista de fray Pedro de Alcalá* (1505), so that his priests, and indeed even he himself, could learn Arabic, and his tolerance also extended to Andalusi music.

Less than six full weeks after the fall of Granada, one Fernando Morales, formerly known as Ayaya Fisteli [Ḥajjāj al-Fistālī] presented himself to the court as the head of the guild of musicians and asked that his continuation in that post be confirmed, which it was.[2] This brief incident is of particular note for at least two reasons: first of all, this “Fernando Morales” had already changed his name from Arabic to Castilian, probably indicating his conversion to Christianity, within weeks of the capture of Granada; and second, this is the first evidence that has survived of a guild structure for musicians in al-Andalus, a system that clearly dates to the Nasrid period and possibly earlier, but is not documented in Arabic sources.[3]

In this early period, while the Capitulations were still being at least nominally observed, Muslim musicians participated in a variety of civic ceremonies, particularly in religious processions. In Baza 1495, for example, city records show that Muslim musicians played in the Corpus Christi processions either at the invitation or order of local authorities, and records show similar events with Muslim musicians took place through the provinces of Granada and Malaga.[4]

The overall spirit of tolerance did not last long, however. Bishop Talavera was soon replaced by the far more zealous Francisco Ximénes de Cisneros, the personal confessor of Queen Isabella, who unleashed a campaign of forced conversions in 1499. The result, predictably, was an armed rebellion by the Muslims of Granada that was only put down some months later. In 1502 Muslims throughout Castile were offered a choice between emigration or conversion, and emigration was only allowed upon payment of a sizable sum, which effectively meant that the urban poor and agricultural workers could not leave. An additional, understandably unacceptable, condition was having to abandon one’s children, whose souls could then be saved by the Catholic Church, which meant that even the wealthy were loath to do so. Interestingly, although Isabella of Castile supported such heavy-handed tactics, her husband Ferdinand did not, and he consequently refused to allow these policies to be carried in his own realm of Aragon, perhaps because in regions such as Valencia, Muslims still constituted a large portion of the population. It was only in 1525 that the Muslims of Aragon, under the rule of Carlos V, were faced with a similar choice of conversion or emigration.

During this period of forced conversions, the guild system for musicians in Granada was disbanded. In 1517, when Fernando Morales died, the musicians of Granada presented the court with a petition to end the *tarcón* tax that they had formerly paid to the head of the guild for all performances at *zambras* and at weddings, arguing that since they were now Christians living under a Christian regime, they should no longer have to pay the taxes that they had previously paid under Muslim rule. Both the tax and the position of head of the guild were eliminated.[5]

From the 1520s to the 1560s there was an agreement between the “Old Christian” and “New Christian” communities (the latter also called “Moriscos”), that as long as the basic outward forms were maintained – attendance at church, baptism, marriage, etc. – that the distinctive features of Morisco culture would be tolerated. In 1526, however, there was an attempt to prohibit the *leilas* (evening gatherings) and *zambras* where Morisco music and dances were performed. Rumors were rampant that these gatherings were actually crypto-Muslim rituals and that the songs that were sung were in praise of the prophet Muḥammad. Astonishingly, the Moriscos protested this new measure directly to Queen Isabella of Portugal, wife of Carlos V, and in 1530 she wrote to Granada asking why such a prohibition was necessary. In 1532 church authorities answered saying that they suspected the Moriscos of singing un-Christian songs in these gatherings, and that same year the Queen responded, rejecting the church's argument, and extending her personal protection to the performance of Morisco music, as long as it contained no criticism of the Christian faith. This royal correspondence concerning the musical traditions of the Moriscos represents a rather extraordinary moment in Spanish history, and it is not clear precisely why, in fact, the Queen was motivated personally to stop the prohibition.[6]

In 1566 there was yet another attempt to prohibit all outward features of Morisco culture. The new laws forbid the use of the Arabic language, the possession of Arabic books, the wearing of Morisco clothing, the use of Morisco musical instruments, the performance of Morisco music and dance, and ordered the destruction of all public baths (since bathing was considered an Islamic practice). Once again, the reaction was an armed rebellion, and this time it lasted for several years before it was put down in a series of bloody campaigns. From this period, however, we have a remarkable document, the *Memorial* of one Francisco Núñez Muley, an elderly Morisco, who pleaded with the Spanish Crown to halt these new laws.

The arguments he offered are fascinating for what they reveal about the worldview of the Moriscos and their knowledge of other Mediterranean cultures:

- He argued that the clothing worn by Moriscos had nothing to do with religion, since the Christians of the East (such as in Syria and Egypt) wore similar clothes;
- Similarly, the Christians of the East spoke Arabic, and the Arabic language of the Moriscos therefore had nothing to do with religion;
- He then argued that if the musical instruments played by the Moriscos were somehow tied to Islam, it would be expected that the instruments of the Moriscos, the Moroccans, and the Turks would be the same, but as was well known, the instruments used by each of these groups were so different that they could therefore not be linked to the religion of Islam;
- Finally, he noted that in his youth, when Bishop Talavera came to celebrate mass in his hometown of Orgiva, since there was no organ, Talavera ordered that Moorish musicians perform during the mass at the various moments when the organ would normally have played, and when Talavera said, "dominus vobiscum" those present responded by saying "il-bara fiku" [Ar. *al-baraka fikum* "God's Blessings be upon you"][7]

Núñez Muley was making what in hindsight feels like a very modern argument – he was essentially arguing for the separation of religious belief from culture, and claiming that belief and faith were not embodied in such outward manifestations as clothing, food, language, or music.

Of particular note in Núñez Muley's *Memorial* is his statement that the Moriscos performed on instruments that were different than those used by their nearest Muslim neighbors, the Moroccans. This observation is borne out by the drawings of Moriscos found in the 16th-century *Trachtenbuch* by Christoph Weiditz where in one scene we can make out a seated drummer playing two drums with sharply curved sticks, a fiddler playing a four-string fiddle held to his chest, and a third musician striking what appears to be a metal ring with a metal rod. None of these instruments is attested in North Africa. If in the early Middle Ages the instruments of the Arabs flowed northwards, in the later Middle Ages, it would appear that some new instruments had either emerged in southern Spain and/or had flowed southward and been adopted by the Muslims of Granada. The fiddle is quite recognizable, but the shape of the drum sticks and the metal ring are unknown from Arabic sources. [See Figure 16]

The two handwritten sentences on the painting can be transcribed as follows: "*Allso dantzen die morystgen mit ain ander schnölle mit den Fingern dar zue*" (left side) and "*das Ist das moristgis dantz spil schre dar zu wie die*

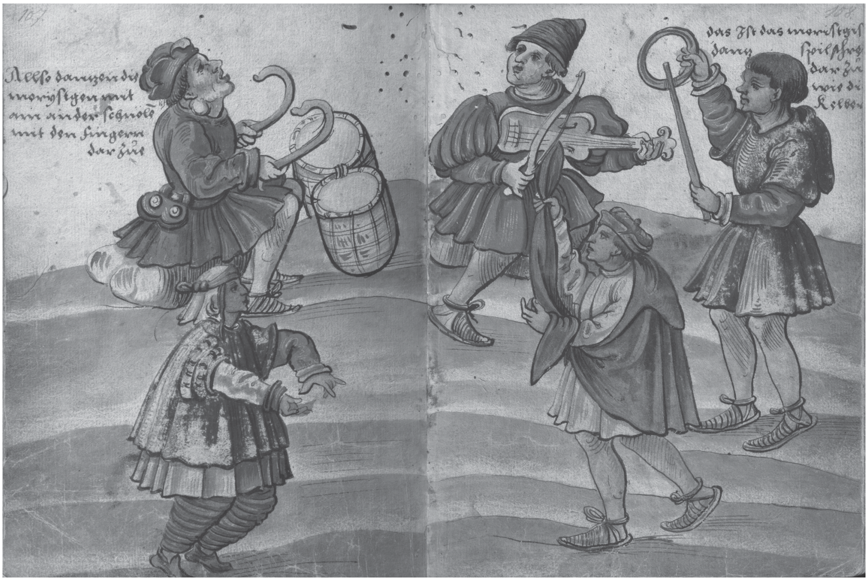

Figure 16 Moriscos dancing.
(Source: Christoph Weiditz, *Das Trachtenbuch*, 1529).

kelber” (right side): “This is how the Moriscos dance quickly [accompanying themselves?] with their fingers,” and “This is the Morisco dance-game, during which they cry out like calves.”[8]

Needless to say, the poignant plea of one elderly Morisco held little sway with the Spanish crown, especially when whole provinces were in a state of open rebellion. When the revolt was finally quelled, some 100,000 Moriscos were deported from the region of Granada to other parts of Spain. Although the intention was clearly to force the Moriscos of Granada to assimilate, and prevent them from conspiring and rebelling, the plan may have backfired. The sudden arrival of Arabic-speaking Moriscos who still dressed, sang, danced, and lived their daily lives in the traditional manner, may instead have injected new life into the withering Morisco communities of further north.

Although we have no medieval examples of notated Andalusi music, a faint echo of Andalusi folk music can be found in a small number of songs that have survived in Spanish sources of the 13th through 17th centuries that are believed to be of Arabo-Andalusian origin. One of the most famous examples is the *romance* “Paseábase el rey moro” which Ginés Pérez de Hita (1544?–1619?) claimed was a translation from the Arabic.[9] One version was notated by Luys de Narbaez in *Los Seys Libros del Delphin de Música de cifra para Tañer de Vihuela* (Valladolid, 1538):

Paseábase el rey moro	The Moorish king was out strolling
Por la ciudad de Granada,	Through the city of Granada
Cartas le fueron venidas	Letters were brought to him [saying]
De que Alhama era ganada	That the city of Alhama had been taken
¡Ay, mi Alhama! […]	Woe, my Alhama! […][10]

The song takes place during the decade-long war on Granada and the Nasrid Sultan, Abū l-Ḥasan ʿAlī, has just received news that the city of Alhama de Granada has fallen to Christian forces, thus in 1482.

An equally famous example is “Tres Morillas” (“Three Moorish Girls”) for which the Spanish scholar Julián Ribera y Tarragó claimed to have found several historical versions in Arabic leading up to the two notated versions, one anonymous and one by Diego Fernández, which appear in the 16th-century *Cancionero de Palacio*.[11] The similarity to the earlier Arabic texts has led scholars to suggest that the melody might be of Arab origin as well. A third example is the song “Calvi bi calvi, calvi arabi,” [Qalbī bi-qalbī, qalbī ʿarabī – “My heart [is hidden] in my heart, my heart is Arab”], which the 16th-century organist Francisco de Salinas (d. 1590) noted was still sung in Arabic in his day by Spanish Christians, though Spanish lyrics (“Rey don Alonso, rey mi señor”) had also been set to the tune.[12]

There are several other songs that are candidates for being considered Arabic songs that survived in Christian tradition, but even if one were to include all of the possibilities, this handful of notated examples offers but a very limited glimpse of the popular repertory. In addition, these examples were preserved only after passing through the ears and hands of Spanish Christians and were no doubt significantly changed in the process. Although they are beautiful songs and of great historical interest, they unfortunately provide little insight into the rest of the Arabo-Andalusian repertory. They do, however, bear testimony, to the constant interaction between Andalusi and Spanish musical traditions at the level of popular music.

The final expulsions

Fear that the Moriscos would once again rebel, or that the Ottoman Turks might invade Spain with help from the Moriscos, had been around for decades. In the 1580s some of the "solutions" for the "Morisco problem" that were discussed in the council of Philip II included loading them all on ships that would then be scuttled, drowning all onboard; deporting them en masse to various locations in the New World, such as Newfoundland; and castrating all male Moriscos.[13] Eventually, a few decades later, under Philip III, these fears and discussions resulted in the final expulsion of the Moriscos first from Valencia and then from Aragon and Castile. Given three days' notice, the Moriscos of Valencia were ordered to assemble with whatever property they could carry, and by the end of November 1609, Valencia had been cleared of Moriscos (some 116,000 persons) who were shipped to the Spanish port of Oran (in modern Algeria), taken to the boundaries of Spanish control, and set loose in the desert.[14] Similar steps were then taken to forcibly expel the Moriscos of Aragon and Catalonia, and finally Castile.[15] By 1614, the ethnic cleansing of Spain was complete.

Ironically, in the midst of the expulsions, one last text offers a final glimpse of Morisco musical life. In 1612, the *Expulsión justificada de los moriscos españoles* [The Justified Expulsion of the Spanish Moriscos] was published under the name of Pedro Aznar Embiz y Cardona, though historians attribute it to an Augustinian monk named Jerónimo Aznar Embiz y Cardona. This vehemently anti-Morisco disquisition characterizes the Moriscos as being overly fond of gatherings and festivities that featured raucous entertainments, story-telling, dancing, singing, promenades amidst gardens and fountains, and "bestial" activities accompanied by all manner of clamor and outcry, and claims that they often went "screaming" through the streets.[16] A rich array of musical instruments accompanied their singing and their dances, such as the *sarabanda* and the *zambra,* including *adufes* [Ar. al-daff, tambourine], *sonajas* [finger cymbals or castanets], *gaitas* [double-reed instrument], *atabales* [Ar. al-ṭabl, drum], *añafir* [Ar. al-nafīr, trumpet], *axabebas*, [Ar. al-shabbāba, flute] *albogues* [Ar. *būq*, small reed instrument], *laúdes* [Ar. al-ʻūd, lute], guitars and *rabeles* [Ar. rabāb, fiddle]. The chronicler of the Morisco revolt of 1568–71, Pérez de Hita, recounts a description of a celebration in the Alpujarras mountains hosted by the rebel leader Muḥammad ibn Umayya, known in Spanish as Aben Humeya, that not only featured much singing and dancing, but also prizes awarded to the best dancers of the *zambra* and the best musicians and singers.[17] Music and dance seem to have been a vibrant part of Morisco culture to the very end.

Between 1609 and 1614, it is thought that 300,000–320,000 persons were forced to leave, perhaps 3–4 percent of the total population of Spain, and some eight times the number of Jews that had been expelled a little over a century earlier.[18] In some regions, such as in Valencia, Murcia, and parts of Aragon, Moriscos had constituted the majority of the rural population, and their departure meant that agricultural areas were abandoned and left unfarmed for decades or even centuries. In some regions of North Africa and the Ottoman Empire the Moriscos, many of whom no longer spoke any Arabic, were allowed to settle and were even officially protected, but in other areas they were attacked, robbed, and even slaughtered as "Christians" and suspected Spanish spies.[19]

Although individual Moriscos are said to have fled into the mountains of Iberia, or assimilated into communities of Gitanos that had been immigrating into Iberia since the early 15th century in violation of the official edicts, the expulsions are usually cited as the end of the 900-year presence of Muslim culture in Iberia, from 711–1614.

Notes

1 Harvey 1990: 324–8; Harvey 2005: 24–6; Catlos 2014: 281–308.
2 Several of the original documents regarding Morales Fisteli are reproduced with modern Spanish transcriptions in Fernández Manzano 2015: 124–34.
3 Fernández Manzano 1985: 153–4; Harvey 2005: 73–4; Gallego and Gámir 1968: 186–7.
4 Fernández Manzano 1985: 158.
5 Fernández Manzano 1985: 156–7.
6 Ibid., 158–60.
7 Ibid., 163–6; for a complete version of the events, see Marmol Carvajal 1996–8; see also, Knighton 2017: 317–18.
8 My thanks to Elisabeth Weber for her help translating the antiquated German.
9 Péres de Hita 1982: 252–5.
10 Narbaez 1945: 48, 60–1.
11 Asenjo Barbieri 1890; Anglés 1947 and 1951.
12 Salinas 1983; Trend 1927; García-Gómez 1956: 1–18.
13 Catlos 2014: 300–1; Harvey 2005: 295–6.
14 Harvey 2005: 309–16
15 Catlos 2014: 301–2; Harvey 2005: 317–31.
16 Cited in Gallego and Gámir 1968: 89–90.
17 For this and other gatherings described by Pérez de Hita, see Gallego and Gámir 1968: 89–98.
18 Catlos 2014: 305; Harvey 2005: 12–13.
19 Catlos 2014: 305–8; for detailed accounts of how the Moriscos fared in various regions, see García-Arenal and Wiegers 2014.

Epilogue

The courtly *ṣawt* tradition sung by the medieval *qiyān* of al-Andalus and professional male singers such as Sulaym, Ḥiṣn, and Ziryāb has disappeared. Remarkably, however, the *muwashshaḥ/zajal* song-form has survived and flourished. After spreading throughout the Arabic-speaking world in the 12th and 13th centuries, it took root in many urban centers in North Africa, the Mashriq, and in Yemen, where it has continued to develop over the centuries with the addition of compositions by local musicians and poets, who at times carried on the practice of setting new words to well-known melodies and vice versa. From the 16th century onwards, enormous songbooks were compiled across the Middle East containing hundreds of *muwashshaḥ* song lyrics, frequently with indications of each song's rhythm and mode. Some of these collections are divided into *nawba* "suites" (modern pronunciation *nūba*) organized around a central melodic mode, and then subdivided into "movements" by rhythm, moving from slow stately rhythms to faster and lighter rhythms at their conclusion.

Several early Andalusi Sufi composers of devotional *muwashshaḥ* and *zajal* songs, such Ibn ʿArabī (1165–1240) and al-Shushtarī (1212–69), traveled to North Africa and the Mashriq, and the song-form began to move through a rapidly emerging network of Sufi orders. In some regions, Sufi orders became the primary transmitters of the tradition. In these contexts, the traditional motifs of drinking cups of wine, being enchanted by young male or female cup-bearers, longing for trysts in beautiful garden settings, and so forth, were reinterpreted as mystical allegories. Drunkenness and wine became symbols of the ecstasy of approaching the Godhead, the handsome youths and charming maidens became reflections of divine beauty, and the yearning for a tryst with the Beloved was transformed into a metaphor for the search for union with God. This religious turn was paralleled in Arabic-speaking Sephardic communities as well where new devotional lyrics in Hebrew were composed and preserved, alongside the older poems of the great Andalusi Jewish poets of the Middle Ages.

The *būq* (Sp. *albogón*), that "noblest of instruments," no longer exists, though its smaller cousin the *albogue* survives in the form of the Basque *alboka* and the Spanish *gaita*. The Arab lute spread through Europe along various routes, was adapted and transformed, had its heyday in the Renaissance, and then gradually fell from favor. In the Middle East, however, it retained its position as a principal instrument until very recently. The bowed string instruments, on the other hand, are one of the remarkable success stories of music history, even on a global scale. A technique that was unknown before the 8th century, it spread from Central Asia in every direction and had a profound impact on nearly every tradition it encountered. The early Middle Eastern/Byzantine bowed instruments were at first held vertically, but quickly acquired different playing positions, across the chest and on the shoulder, and branched out into a plethora of different shapes and forms. Many of the medieval string instruments, plucked and bowed (citoles, gitterns, vielles, baldosas, vihuelas, rebecs, psalteries, and so forth) were over time replaced with their more modern descendants: violins, violas, cellos, and double basses. The Spanish *rabel*, however, has survived as a folk instrument, given rise to a special genre of poetry, the *rabelada*, and has recently experienced a revival through festivals and competitions. The violin and viola (and to a lesser extent, the cello and double bass) circled back to the Middle East and in many regions replaced the various indigenous forms of *rabāb*.

Performance practices for *muwashshaḥ* and *zajal* songs have changed dramatically over the centuries and are quite diverse not only from region to region in the modern Arab Middle East, but even within a single location. Not long ago at urban Moroccan weddings, for example, one could hear a small orchestra composed of Muslim and Jewish musicians performing a repertory with traditional Arabic lyrics praising wine and cup-bearers, extolling the beauty of gardens, flowers, and birdsong, complaining poignantly of the pains of love, and expressing hopes for a lovers' tryst. At the local Sufi lodge (*zāwiya*), some of those Muslim musicians might later be found singing the same melodies to more religious lyrics, accompanied only by percussion instruments, at a ceremony known as a *dhikr* (lit. "remembrance of God"). While at the local synagogue, the same melodies might be sung *a cappella* with Hebrew lyrics as *piyyutim* or *bakkashot* (paraliturgical songs) from songbooks in which each song was marked "To the tune of …" followed by the opening words of the Arabic text, written in Hebrew characters. In Israel, this repertory is still performed by the Israeli Andalusian Orchestra (Hebrew, *Ha-tizmoret ha-andalusit ha-isra'elit*) founded in 1987 by Moroccan immigrants to preserve the rich Jewish heritage of Arabic and Hebrew Andalusian music.

In most regions there is no particular order to the *muwashshaḥ* and *zajal* songs in the local repertory, but in performance the selected songs are typically grouped by melodic mode and organized by rhythm, often progressing from slow heavy rhythms to lighter, faster ones. In the Mashriq, *muwashshaḥāt* in the 19th and 20th centuries were often performed as part of a compound form, a "suite," known as the *waṣla*, combined with other song genres. In Morocco, in contrast, most modern performances are based upon a particularly authoritative songbook, the 18th-century *Kunnāsh* of al-Ḥā'ik, and songs are usually sung in the order set down in that work, now familiar to listeners. In some places the songs are sung in unison by a chorus of singers, and in other places there is a featured soloist who alternates with the chorus and/or jumps to a higher pitch to be heard over the other singers. Performances sometimes involve a small ensemble with only one musician playing each instrument, but, especially in more recent times, many performances involve orchestral ensembles of two dozen or more musicians.

Everywhere, however, the *muwashshaḥ/zajal* repertory has come to be regarded as traditional and even "classical," similar to the way Westerners conceive of "classical music." It is a shared heritage to be preserved, and as such has been embraced and is performed by Christian Arabs as well. Music conservatories in Arab countries teach this repertory to students as both as a cultural patrimony and as some of the finest and most authentic examples of the traditional melodic modes and rhythms. In many places, local repertoires and performance practices have also become tightly bound to regional identities. Although their roots in al-Andalus are widely recognized, and the connection to other traditions of Andalusi music are acknowledged, there is a profoundly local aspect to these traditions. Sephardic and Muslim Arab communities in diaspora have created associations, schools, and summer camps to teach this repertory to their children as one of the most highly valued markers of their identities.

Although originally considered lighter and more popular than the courtly *ṣawt* tradition, the *muwashshaḥ/zajal* repertory has become in modern times the defining genre of Andalusi music in the Middle East. Having now been continuously performed for over a millennium, it is one of the longest surviving musical genres in the world. It is a remarkable heritage that stems from a remarkable culture, that of medieval al-Andalus, and survives today as a tradition that is both medieval and modern, pan-Arab and local, secular and religious, Muslim, Christian, and Jewish.

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